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LIFE THOUGHTS



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LIFE THOUGHTS

FOR

YOUNG WOMEN.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "EXPOSITORY LECTURES ON PHILIPPIANS," "LIFE THOUGHTS
FOR YOUNG MEN," "RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN," ETC.

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DEDICATION.

TO MY WIFE,
WHO FOR LONG YEARS HAS HELPED
AND CHEERED ME IN MY TOIL,
AND WHO
IN THE SACRED RELATIONS
OF WIFE AND MOTHER
ILLUSTRATES THE BEST ELEMENTS AND
AIMS OF THAT TRUE WOMANHOOD
WHICH I HAVE ATTEMPTED
TO DESCRIBE AND ENFORCE IN THE
FOLLOWING PAGES,
THIS BOOK
IS
DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

IT was my purpose three years ago, when a similar course of lectures was delivered to young men, to perform a like ministry in behalf of young women. That purpose, after a longer delay than I had intended, is now accomplished. These lectures were delivered on successive Sabbath evenings, during the spring and autumn of the present year, to the people whom it is the pleasure of the author to serve.

They are now presented in this printed form as they were originally written and delivered. In the multitude of cares and duties that fall to the lot of a city pastor, no time has been allowed for review and corrections that I am quite sure need to be made, to entitle the book to anything like place and recognition among productions of literary excellence. I must be content to allow my sense of their many infirmities to vanish in the hope of the good they may accomplish.

In the main I have sought to select those subjects which call for attention in these times, and in some part have not escaped the opposition of those who fail to agree with the author's views. Whatever difference of opinion or theory there may be on disputed points, the writer has had but one aim in view from first to last, namely: the exaltation of woman's character and mission.

It has pleased God, both in the favor of the reading public and in the moral and spiritual results achieved, greatly to own the volume to young men, and I now send this unpretentious companion volume forth with the earnest prayer that a like blessing may attend it in behalf of young women.

M. R.

St. Louis, Mo., December, 1883.

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LIFE THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

WOMAN.

“Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Man like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained,
And in her looks; * * * *
Grace was in her step, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.” (*Milton.*)

IT is the purpose of these discourses to set apart in as faithful a manner as possible, a distinct and most important class of the community. Three years ago it seemed well to the writer to perform a like special ministry in behalf of young men. It pleased God so to own that effort that it furnished not only an ample compensation for the task imposed, but has encouraged the belief that a similar service to young women might be equally profitable. It is a frequent and not wholly untruthful charge that the preaching of our time is too diffusive, and not applied as frequently and as specifically as it should be to separate classes, with respect to the important duties and

responsibilities of every-day life. If this charge has any foundation in fact, it is no fault of the Gospel, for it is masterly in its beautiful adaptation not only to all classes, but to all classes in the variety of their functions and aims. When we go out to water the flowers, the purpose will not be gained by pouring a sparse shower on the whole lawn; each several stock makes its appeal, and the refreshing drop must go direct to every smallest rootlet. The Gospel is for men, but it is also for women, and very fully does it respond to every necessity, every faculty, and every possibility of her wonderful being.

If I may by God's blessing succeed in underlaying the beautiful fabric of woman's character and life with the blessed and imperishable principles of the Gospel, which furnish the only rich soil out of which a womanhood worthy the being woman is, can grow, I am sure I shall serve my young friends in such way as to challenge God's blessing, and stir in them such impulses as will lead them to make their lives not only a blessing to humanity, but a becoming testimony to the hand that formed them.

Woman in all the varied appeal of her being and functions has furnished one of the problems with which the ages have wrestled. A question so intimately related to the well-being of society, the progress of civilization, and as well to the consummation of God's kingdom on earth, cannot be settled in a day. This fact alone, is no mean testimony to the endowment woman possesses, and to the important place in

the scope of humanity which her Creator designs her to fill.

With all that has been written this problem remains yet unsolved, at least it has not yet attained to harmony and completeness.

There has been progress, a progress in some part whose beauty and worth prove its truth, but still there is a clamor in the air, and the end is not yet. One of the live and stirring topics of the time is the "*Woman Question*." It is one of those great movements which come along in the world's advancement toward the final ripening which is to bring the angels back into the sky as at Bethlehem. This mighty question involves so much that God does not choose to be hasty, and the world can afford to wait.

There are elements of progress in the very settlement of it. Perhaps the crisis is not far off. The time was when others spoke for woman, and as often against her as for her, but the time now is, when she elects to speak for herself, sometimes wisely, sometimes otherwise.

The difficulty in solving this problem arises not so much from any embarrassments that inhere in it, as from mistaken methods in working it out, and from aiming at results which lie beyond its limit. If a soldier's gun has a range of only a hundred yards, he wastes his time to be shooting at the sun.

The royal rank, high privileges, and sublime functions of woman as a distinct and queenly class in humanity, will never be properly and fully apprehended

so long as discord and violence obtain between the methods employed, the purposes sought, and the princely nature with which God has endowed her. Whatever scheme we may please to adopt to ascertain what woman is in distinction from man, and what she is for, how far she may trench upon the dominion which man claims as his, and where she must be restrained; at least there must be harmony between our scheme, and the being woman is, for if we jar against her nature, and rush as a foe upon the laws by which she is governed, and by which her royal womanhood is guarded, the method will endanger, if it does not defeat the purpose, and what we are pleased to style reform will have in it the violence and waste of rebellion. Undoubtedly the strongest argument against much that is being said and done to-day professedly in behalf of woman, is *woman*.

Believing that one of the evils and weaknesses of much discussion of this vexed question is found in a disposition to separate her creation from any bearing upon it, except a false bearing, we ask your attention first to the fact of woman's creation; possibly we may find here some image not only of the noble being she is, but as well some interpretation of the wide and beautiful kingdom she is designed to fill.

One of the marvellous, at least striking, things in the sublime order of creation is the lull following the making of man. That last great work of the Godhead seemed to be the fitting conclusion of the achievement of the beginning—the last note in the thrilling har-

mony. There is great majesty in the words that follow:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.”

It was not until stars had commenced to shine, birds to sing, flowers to bloom; not until the animals had passed before Adam to receive their names; not until he had assumed his place as lord of creation and keeper of Paradise, that, as if it were an afterthought with God, He proceeded to supply the missing link in the mystic chain of being.

But why defer a work of such importance until after the sweet rest of the first Sabbath, and when the divine verdict of “good,” “very good,” had been pronounced upon what had been accomplished?

Whatever may be the reason, I am sure there is no disrespect meant to woman in this delay, but manifestly a purpose to confer a brighter crown upon her than she would otherwise have worn. When God detains there is reason for it, and this resuming of creation that woman might grace the achievement has in it an instructive significance.

There is a feeling in manhood that defers to woman. The great God will keep the best until the last—the morning stars and the sons of God had no such impulse to shout creation’s symphony, as when God made woman, herself the thrilling chorus of creation’s hymn. Not before, but after the house was finished and furnished, did God bring to the first man his

quently bride. Before this, as he gazed upon the animals going to and fro, and listened to the sigh of the winds in his Eden home, what a sense of loneliness must have possessed him!

May not God have designed that he should have such an experience, that he might properly appreciate the gift he was about to receive?

At least his Father saw that it was "not good for man to be alone." It would be no compliment to the genius with which God endowed Adam, not to conclude that he noticed and felt the great disparity between himself—the lone rational one—and the brute creation about him. In the noblest of these, there was no likeness to himself, no response to the out-yearnings of the soul within him. If there is to be a man in creation, if he is to fulfill the mission his being indicates, then, it is not complete—there is a head, but there was no crown for it until God made a woman; there was a human heart, but no object full worthy its native affection until God made a woman; there was a life, royal, kingly, but no aim adequate to its sweep until God made a woman.

How impressive! What a high verdict it is on humanity to observe that good as all God has made is, there was nothing that could match the man, nothing that could sufficiently challenge his faculties so as to call out their full scope—"for Adam there was not found a help meet for him."

Paradise with its bewitching beauty, its weird wonder, and varied melody, was not sufficient to meet

every want God had placed within that royal manhood. Companionship is a yearning of the true soul that tells that God has played on its pulses. It never was good for man to be alone, not any more for woman. Man has fully illustrated what an English author says in these words: "For man to be alone means suicide; for two men to be together means homicide; woman alone can keep society moving and healthful. The woman and the little child are the saviours of social order this day all over the world. For woman to be alone is as bad as for man to be alone. Safety is in contrast, and in mutual complement." Creation is not finished, man is not complete without woman. So it was no pastime—no mere feat of power, no experiment on what had already been made, when God lulled Adam to slumber, and from part of himself hard by his heart, formed another whom He brought to him as his, and whom in the ecstasy of his rapture he recognized as bearing some likeness to himself, and who by her superior charms met the noblest wants of his being, and was worthy to be by him named woman?

I think we men must yield the palm, and own that woman is not a degree below, but a degree above us. It was no credit to man that he had a rib to spare; it was a rib that God had fashioned, and so far above the dust from which he sprang, as to be shapely and a thing of life. As Matthew Henry quaintly says: "The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust doubly refined, one remove farther from the earth." Man was made a little lower than the angels.

Glorious, beautiful woman! needed no such comparison, and was made equal to them. At least, such was she, who now stood before the glad and wondering Adam; God's best gift, and the final and signal impulse to the anthem peal of the morning stars and the sons of God.

Mrs. Sigourney catches the thought of this closing scene in the drama of creation, and weaves it in a most felicitous manner, with the following lines:

"Last came a female form, more soft, more fair,
And Eden smiled to see the stranger there;
Then tones of joy from harps seraphic rung,
The stars of morning in their courses sung;
Earth echoed back a shout of grateful love
From every valley, cavern, stream, and grove.
Man, fill'd with praise, in solemn rapture stood,
God bow'd to view his work, and God pronounced it good."

The woman, not the man, was the last, sublimest touch of Jehovah in the achievement of creation, and not until she came could Adam be the best of himself, and now without woman there would be no basis for the great fabric of society, and the best civilization would not only be checked in its march, but blasted in its hope. Man has no advantage when he speaks of the dependence of woman, for without her he is an incomplete humanity, and just what she came to be to him, under the sway of God's just law, he has always shown to lack in himself, whenever he has subjected her to degradation, and made her the victim of his vanity and passion. And on the other hand, woman has no

advantage when she has unwisely vaunted her independence, for then she has violated the sublimest elements of her being, and assumed a promotion which is unseemly and hurtful.

The creation of woman is not simply God's revelation of sex, but His announcement of "*the fact of the inter-dependence of the sexes.*"

Here is a distinction most clearly established, and it has an important bearing not only upon the nature, but upon the mission and life of both. There is a mutual dependence, and wherever this is disregarded the social order is disturbed, and woman even more than man is the sufferer.

Whether we include in it the marriage relation or not, God announced a great principle—one of the laws by which the two sides of humanity are held together—when he purposed to provide an help-meet for man in woman. That is, He would not only establish the marriage relation, sealing Himself the nuptial bonds of the first pair, but He would supplement or complete the humanity that was represented in Adam, and so, by the influence and sympathy of the last falling in one way and another upon the first, humanity, before the fall in innocence, and after the fall in grace, would round up into the symmetry of the Divine image.

For Adam, before woman came, "there was not found a help-meet for him," nor in the wide garden of the world is there yet such a help-meet as he needs, until in some way he is brought under the refining influence and resistless touch of the royal nature of woman.

Woman is "not his double, not a mere repetition of himself, but the complement of his own being, corresponding with himself in all essential particulars, but at the same time supplying certain elements for social life and spiritual intercourse in which he himself was lacking."

As Britain's laureate has it—

" Each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single, pure, and perfect animal;
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life." (*"Princess,"* VII.)

A beautiful picture of a complete humanity, a beautiful image of what may yet be realized through God's merciful interposition, is that presented by the first pair in Eden. For marriage attire, the pure white robes of a spotless innocence; for a ministering priest, the mighty God, their own loving Father; for an altar-shrine, the vale of Eden, in which the flowers bloomed, the birds warbled, and over which the fresh blue sky bent its graceful arch; for attendants, the white-winged angels, scattering orange blossoms, and ringing marriage bells brought from heaven. Oh, what a bride was she! what a home was theirs!

" And there these twain upon the skirts of time
Sat side by side, full summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be.
Self-reverent each, and reverencing each;
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other, even as those who love."
(*Tennyson's "Princess,"* VII.)

The whole sublime scene is God's own beautiful testimony to the glory and high mission of woman.

Whatever we may learn of woman as a distinct part of humanity, whatever of guidance she may get for the noble life of which she is capable from her creation, will not be so much the result of any distinct statement, as the expression of the royal nature with which God has endowed her, and the revelation of her own peculiar relation—I will not say to an opposite sex, though that is true, but to the other side of a humanity which is incomplete without her. In the ordering, in the motives, and in the purposes of life, no young woman, if she be wise, will disregard these.

I speak of them now, not so much to resist or offset any of those wild and erratic notions that so much retard the true solution of the problem of woman's mission in our time, but more particularly to show in some wise the most magnificent endowment God has conferred upon woman.

I am persuaded, as I try to take its measurement that while woman remains woman she is the prince of human beings, and outside the domain of illiteracy and barbarism, she is, she may be, far more the master than the servant of man. If this be not true, then it is not true that the noblest moral elements of our human nature have higher and wider sway than the intellectual faculties.

But alas! Eden is blighted, and the beautiful apocalypse of its primitive glory has vanished as a summer cloud. Adam and Eve, blushing and weeping, are

driven from the abode of innocence, and a flaming cherubim guards the shattered gate. What of woman now? Has all her beauty vanished? Is the charm of so exquisite a being struck to the dust? Has all her hope gone out in darkness? Is she no longer the better-half of our humanity, and with her sad precipitation is her bright destiny forfeited? Wonderful prophecy! Wonderful love of God! The "seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." That ruin must be recovered, and yet woman shall come to be God's angel incarnate. Here again man has no advantage over woman. If we say that the history of a lost world is traceable to woman, we must remember that the sublime destiny toward which the world is moving is not so much due to man as to woman; for by her who was Life in the garden of innocence came that One who is now the light and life of men—at once the Saviour and ideal of humanity. First by creation, and second by Incarnation, God has ennobled and exalted woman. By a method baffling in its mystery, a new era has dawned upon the world, in which woman plays such a part as to invest her being with wonderful significance; "an era that, beginning in the domestic constitution as its germ, shall evolve into the momentous history of the race in society, in the state, and in the kingdom of God." In the garden of Eden, God showed us woman; in the Incarnation He has shown us womanhood; a thing not indeed to be worshiped—idolatry of or over woman has always worked ruin—but a character to be attained

and admired. Mary was not an angel, not even a saint; she was a virgin, a woman.

What is the difference between the unfallen woman of creation and the woman broken and despoiled by the common ruin? In some respects certainly very much. It becomes us not to be wise above what is written, and it would be unpardonable presumption to indulge in fanciful speculation on the borders of a subject that involves one of the profoundest mysteries of the material universe; yet we may venture to affirm what we cannot fully explain, namely, that woman in this new era, precipitated by a common fall, has marvellous advantages over her first erring sister, even before she put forth her hand to take the forbidden fruit. Eve began with Adam, made in the image of God; you to whom I speak may begin with Christ, the second Adam, who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. You have not only a gracious deliverance from the common ruin, but you have a masterly protection from the repetition of such a catastrophe; and set over against your struggle for a royal womanhood, you have a model in Jesus far greater and nobler than Eve had in Adam. What destiny these twain, so sublimely made one, would have wrought out for themselves had not the showy tempter (still the peril of woman) been permitted to intrude upon the unsullied joy of that Eden-home we may only conjecture; but the bright bow that hangs on the retreating storm-cloud when the sun smites the falling drops with his wing of flame, is not

plainer than is the glorious destiny marked out now for woman when loyal to herself and to her God. Strange as it may seem, the relation which woman sustains to that other side of humanity of which we have ventured to speak, and of which she is the beautiful crown and complement, has not changed in fact, by reason of the shadows of the fall that lie on this dispensation; they have, on the other hand, been given a wider function, and have been made to underlie and conform to that thrilling destiny toward which the world is making its steady and stately march.

Your charm is not that you are like man, nor is it your function to aim to become like him. You are still the better half of the complete orb, the brightest rim of the whole circle. The question is not one of superiority on either side, but of harmonious compensation. As one wisely puts it: "I would as soon think of contending with you which is the more beautiful flower, the rose or lily; which is more essential to the life of the human frame, the brain or the heart; which is more valuable to the world, the glare of the day or the darkness of the night; which does more for the security of the planetary system, the centripetal or the centrifugal force. Both are necessary; each is admirable in its place; and the one was contrived for the express purpose of being an adjunct and auxiliary of the other."

Neither have her faculties, her moral and intellectual endowment, perished in the common ruin.

In spirit and purpose they have changed—sadly

changed; they are perverted, but they are not destroyed.

On the other hand, soiled and imbruted as they sometimes are, they have now a mightier quickening, a wider range of impulse, and with her consent, they may attain to a development that would not demean an angel.

Woman certainly is not the sinless being she was when beautiful as a star she came from the hand of her Maker; but I do not believe that there is in humanity a being, who, even in her fallen self furnishes so much to which the glorious gospel, and the great Christ of the gospel can make such successful appeal. It is a testimony to the noble being she still is, that as you have seen a piece of broken glass in the debris, under the sunbeam, throw off a flash of beauty, so from amid her ruin may often be seen, under the challenge of beauty or suffering, some lighting up of the old glory, as if the Eden glow were not all gone. Woman can still do that divinest thing—love. Nearly as sin has quenched the celestial fires of her soul, it speaks much for the nature God gave her, and more for the possibilities of her being, that under no other culture than the moral and intellectual, she has so often shown herself to be so much of an angel. Woman is no longer woman when the delicacy, sympathy, and love, as much her characteristics as light is of the star, and as color and fragrance are of the rose, drop into vulgarity, freeze in selfishness, or consume in vanity.

But with these, even where grace has not yet come

to direct and sanctify their sacrifice, how often we have seen in daughter, sister, wife, and mother, that which challenged our admiration, and stimulated our prayer that so loving a nature, would look into the face of her Lord, throw her arms about His neck, and with that majesty of affection, of which she alone is capable, tell Him that she commits herself body and soul into His sacred keeping.

I seek in these words not to flatter you on the one hand, nor yet in the least wise to dishearten you on the other. I rather come to inspire you, to lead you in that burst of heaven's light that shines out from the dark background of our common ruin, to grasp a true estimate of yourselves, to see how your being and functions are inwoven with God's purposes as no others are; and grasping these thoughts as you may, I think you must shudder at all waste of high opportunity, and all infidelity to sacred duty. I would set it before you, as if an angel had written it on the clear sky in letters of fire, that woman was sent into this world to be the queen of the human heart and mistress of the moral destinies of humanity. Woe to her who flings such a crown to the dust, or trails such robes in the mire! If I have spoken with enthusiasm, I have not exaggerated; and I must not suffer you to go without lifting you into a proper sense of your responsibility, and a proper appreciation of your opportunity, by the sweep of these facts which God has been pleased to root in you, and which by your choice and employment will be made to glow in the world's history like

the topaz and jasper of the New Jerusalem, or else to flash and smite like the lightning that cleaves the cloud. Oh, woman! God came to your coronation, and lustrous like Himself is the crown He has placed upon your brow. Oh, woman! do you realize that your responsibility takes its majestic measurement, not so much from the great work that appeals to you on every hand, as from the matchless being you are, or may become through Him who loved you and gave Himself for you?

No matter what you think your mission to be, if you would be true to yourself, if you would throw back a light responsive to the light whence you came; if you would bear yourself down through the world's need brightening by the wear of duty, as rocks washed white by crystal waves, until caught up and transfigured in the glory that such contact with God must kindle; then, indeed, must you know, and love, and serve Him, who was born of a woman, that woman might have in Him the sublimest impulse to, and highest ideal of womanhood. The great need of all—every truly enlightened mind will readily see how piety is eminently becoming a woman. Without it, what a bird of passage, if not a drudge of her own, or of another's burdens she often becomes!

Under the most painful, the most forbidding circumstances, you cannot but be greatly advantaged by the refinements and hopes of Christian grace. In no other way can you get back to your primitive mastery of excellence, in no other way own His love who fashioned

you, and then gave His life to restore you to more than woman's first excellence, in His own image. No hand can so well retune and sweep the strings of your life harp as the hand by which they were first strung.

It is but most fitting that the best elements and faculties of your nature and character should be restored to harmony and sublimated, as well as wisely employed, by your tenderest devotion to the "One altogether lovely." It is proper that your heart be cleansed so that all the influences that breathe from it upon the various relations of life be good, and only good.

A woman without the sweet devotion of piety not only defaces the image of God on her own soul, but she thickens the shadows that make life weary for others, if she does not add to the crimes that blight and destroy. That is not her place whom God so honored in Jesus Christ. He comes to put a better crown upon you, for He has not forgotten the baptism of woman's tears, nor her anointing for the burial, nor her beautiful ministry at the cross and sepulchre. It ill becomes you to grieve your Master by marring such a vision. Rather does He expect you to image before a weary, sinning world, His own blessed nature and life. How can you refuse a plea which most of all must ennoble you? Oh, woman! royal woman! I hear in the great endowment God has conferred upon you, the Master's call. Turn promptly about and gaze into His loving face until the divine glow of His spirit burns in your own, and with all your nature lit up by

the heavenly radiance set about to fulfill your noble mission, and your life here, and your memory hereafter, will be what is only becoming to such a being as woman :

“ The measure of a blessed hymn
To which our hearts could move ;
The breathing of an inward psalm,
A canticle of love.”

CHAPTER II.

INFLUENCE AND POSSIBILITIES OF WOMAN.

“Man may the sterner virtues know,
Determined justice, truth severe;
But female hearts with pity glow,
And woman holds affliction dear;
For guiltless woes her sorrows flow,
And suffering vice compels her tear;
'Tis her's to soothe the ills below
And bid life's fairer views appear.” *(Crabbe.)*

WITH some brief intimation of the nature of woman, and of God's purpose in her as interpreted by her creation, it is proposed now to consider as well as can be done in the brief limits of one chapter her influence and possibilities. This will involve some notice of her history in the world.

It may be said I am sure with emphasis, and in some wise to woman's highest commendation, that as a distinct part of the race, she has baffled her embarrassments, and made for herself a history, the record of which whether good or bad, is an expression of her influence and possibilities.

This great question, I think, is forcing itself to the front as one of the results of the world's marvellous progress, by which, whether always wise or not, woman is finding a far wider place in the vast and

varied scope of human activity; and it will be well if it secure from both men and women the attention which it merits, and now challenges with so much force. Woman is too important a factor in society, in civilization, and in the realization of the best hopes of mankind to admit of indifference, either on her part or on ours, on such a question. It seems to me especially important that young women, and all women should consider with great seriousness the growing trend of this vital topic, in this time when the earth trembles under the rush of stirring events.

The great heart of society in many places feels the hot throb of revolution just now. We are greatly mistaken if we suppose that woman has no force, and is in no wise associated with these startling movements. For good or ill she is an element of power in every one of them, and whether she be right or wrong, it is injustice to her, and to the generation coming up from the dawn of womanhood, to ignore this fact. The forces of violence and unbelief, always in fellowship, are arraying themselves, ostensibly, as they affirm, to secure a better social order, a more rational liberty, but really to attain the license of revolution which is the rage of selfishness, set on fire of hell.

It seems to me a wise thing when such ominous fires shoot their flushed darts up on the horizon, to instruct and guard well those quiet, and most potent, because quiet forces in society, that the sublime progress of the race may neither be interrupted nor swept back.

In every great moral movement the world must have the influence of woman, and in no small part because she is so formidable an enemy when set against the right. There is a demand that the young women of this land, and that includes a larger class than those just blossoming into womanhood, be instructed in these vital questions, so that they may gather up the reins of the masterly power God has given them, and in the sweep of their influence resist as they may, and as some before them have done, those tides of evil which are the peril of nations and the curse of generations.

There never was a time in the history of the world, either on the side of right or wrong, when the influence and possibilities of woman meant so much, and were so rashly and divinely challenged as to-day. The statement should be startling to all noble-minded women, and I trust it will come to you whom I now address, as the bugle note of one marching to a blessed victory, or as the dazzle of an angel speeding with unwearied wing to the achievement of a good ministry.

There is not so much as is sometimes supposed in the charge, that the rights of women have always been restricted, when we remember that in the history of nations, in the enterprise, literature, noblest charity, and alas! the crimes of communities, her name has not been left out. Indeed, I think, if all history, whatever its character, were written with a full and unprejudiced knowledge of the facts, with a clearer apprehension of the motives and spirit that underlie and charge

events, and less bias to their visible manifestation, we would be amazed at the very prominent place woman has occupied in the molding events of the ages, both helpful and hurtful.

It remains true, however, that the power of woman in society, and in all that constitutes its life and work, is not appreciated as it should be, and as I believe it is yet destined to be. But how are we to form a correct estimate of woman's influence and possibilities?

In part by the faculties of her being, of which notice has been taken, and will only appear now, as they occur in the exercise of the functions with which she has been endowed. Another method will be what she has already achieved as an angel fallen or redeemed. I cannot trace her entire history, but may touch upon it here and there, and so give you the light and shade in which it is enshrined.

To those who believe in the simple and touching account of the fall, I need not say that the ensnaring influence of woman precipitated an event in Eden which not only shocked, but shattered the moral constitution of the race. It has been sneeringly counted by some, that the perfection of Adam was not worth the keeping, if a woman's delusive story could despoil it. Let us remember that it was not God's arm that was about Adam's perfection so much as his own will; and if we may judge by many who since then have been esteemed royal in their manhood, and who successful in resisting all other evils, have time and again gone down, as if smitten by the lightning, before the

blandishments, charms, or misguided devotion of the women they loved, we may conclude that he was no weakling, whom a serpent could not conquer, but whom a woman in the mastery of her influence could discrown. The forbidden fruit in her hand, as it does now, glowed like an illumined gate, and then as now was the widest portal to ruin. It was far greater weakness in Adam to charge his sin upon his wife, than to take the apple so "pleasant to the eyes" from her fair hand.

But no matter; here is a fair illustration of that influence of woman upon mankind, which is hers to-day, and according to the standard of her character, will be to the race as the very breath and touch of God, or else as the stroke of a fiend's wing. The woman combined such moral elements in herself, such faculties of real power over others, that when disguised of their real purpose, and brought to bear upon the man, his very perfection bowed to their sweep, and when the wave had passed over him, the light that was in him had vanished into darkness. It was the perverted greatness of the woman that wrought his ruin, and to-day we have in this one of the mightiest forces of evil.

Of physical strength, as compared with man, woman can make no boast, and certainly, if she will accept the record of history, she will hardly venture to claim intellectual equality, save in exceptional instances; but she does wield that mightiest of all forces in humanity, I mean moral power, to an extent that no others are endowed.

It is a singular fact, that for the first twenty centuries, the space between Adam and Moses, "the names of but five women, good or bad, have escaped the general wreck or oblivion of ancient times. Of these, Eve, the mother of all living, is the first, and Sarah, the mystic mother of all the faithful, is the last." In explanation of this fact, it is affirmed that the blight with which in an evil hour woman had smitten herself, her husband, and posterity, had struck out her history for nearly one-third of the flight of time. And is it not quite as singular, that when she does appear again, it is in connection with a calamity that plunged the antediluvian world into a watery grave? The wise ones of our day will smile, but I only utter what has abundant illustration in our own time, when I say, that there is a dreadful significance in these words of inspiration: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair;" that is, they only saw, and were entirely controlled by the thin veil of personal beauty, without regard to excellence of character, and the result was a generation, the very imagination and thought of whose heart was only evil continually. There were women enough, women of great physical beauty, as fickle as the tint of the flowers, but there were no mothers—no womanhood. I believe it was in the power of woman, who had so much to do in inviting the flood, to have swept every cloud out of the sky, and to have made it radiant and resonant with the sweet mercy of a long-suffering God, for I think it is legitimate to judge of her capacity to do good by the

master power which she has often shown in doing evil. I will not be understood as charging upon woman all the crimes and calamities that afflict the race, for that itself would be little less than a crime, and as contrary to my belief as to my purpose.

I am not now aiming so much to expose or commend the character of woman, as to illustrate the mighty scope of her influence and possibilities, for this is one of the truths enforced alike by her nature and history. I have said that her power, neither in the extent nor character of it, is appreciated as it deserves to be. Woman has laid the foundation of empires, and more than once she has hurled them to ruin. The empire that could boast a Babylon was founded by a woman—Semiramis, the widow of the founder of Nineveh. The overthrow of the Trojan commonwealth was due to no cause so much as to the beauty and perfidy of Helen.

“What mighty ills have not been done by woman?
Who was't betray'd the capitol? A woman!
Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!
Who was the cause of a long ten years' war,
And laid at last Troy in ashes? Woman!”

(*Otway.*)

Alexander Campbell says: “I am of opinion that there never was a nation, a state, or empire—not even an administration, save that of General Jackson—that was not more or less reared or ruined, strengthened or weakened, controlled or managed, by the policy, the skill or the dexterity of woman.” It is not true

that woman has no representation in all the great forces and enterprises of the world's civilization; the material agent is not so manifest in her, but she touches and thrills all the internal pulses of it. Such is her marvellous endowment, and such her relationship that I do not believe it is possible to estimate the power and extent of her influence for good or evil. And I say this not as a statement that might also be made of man, but as a fact that is preëminently suggested by the being she is. Whatever may be claimed for her as woman, and as belonging to her kingdom, I hold that her past history is an awful and a sublime interpretation of her moral influence and possibilities. And you will observe that I am not disposed to put limitation upon her, since it is so evident that she has shown the mastery peculiar to her in every relation, in the empire, in the state, in the home, in education, in literature, in reform, in crime, and everywhere her sovereignty over the minds of men and the destinies of humanity, has flashed like a consuming flame or hovered like a ministering angel. If you wonder why I do not bring more examples from the earlier time to compensate for the many who have put more of blush than of glory on the page of history, I have but to answer, that the far-off past was not the golden age of woman. It is easier to say that the fault was man's, but without shielding him from blame where he was guilty, I really think that a better solution of the fact is given in these words of another: "Woman was not made to found cities and empires, to command

armies and navies, to enter the arena of political strife, to figure in camps, in tilts and tournaments, to mingle in the intrigues and cabals of kings and courts. She was made for other ends, to move in other circles, and to exert an influence more pure, more powerful, more lasting." If I read history correctly, and do not mistake the superior character of a later civilization, this diviner sphere of woman was never more generally recognized than now, and our civilization, and all the mighty forces pulsing in it, were never so much under her moral sway. It is true that in the earlier ages of the world, we find a very large amount of her influence, and interpretation of her possibilities in that which did blushing discredit to her origin, and to her better being, but it is just as true that as the world advanced, and she has come into a larger and truer vision of her being, and as she has been advantaged by a civilization largely rooted in her devotion, she has transfigured the page of history into an apocalypse of beauty. She is still chargeable with much that ill becomes her; still it is true that the influence and possibilities of woman are reflected as never before from the side of her virtues, her graces, and her accomplishments.

Among the great forces of our civilization, education has a very prominent place. With less of opportunity, and more of embarrassment than men have encountered, woman has given some intimation of her possibilities in this direction, which may be regarded as a flattering prophecy. Perhaps she has not occu-

pied so large a place in the arena of subtle controversy, or in the profounder investigations of science and philosophy; but she has had, and now has, more to do with those departments and offices of education which appeal to, and subserve the interests of every day life, than any others have.

I do not mean that it is not possible for her to attain to intellectual greatness, or that real genius finds no illustration in woman. She has won laurels on Mount Parnassus, and plucked flowers from Mount Helicon. She has wrestled with philosophers more than once to their discomfiture, and waved her well-won palm in the groves of the Academies.

But that is not the mightiest education which most challenges and oftenest receives the empty trump of fame, but that which best interprets the beings we are, and best qualifies us to do our life-work. For this, woman has an incomparable endowment, and is wielding such an influence to-day as never before, and as prophecies promisingly for the future of mankind.

Has it occurred to you that in very large part the education of the youth of this land, and of the whole world is in the hands of woman to-day? A recent writer says: "The moral position of woman in the leading Christian races, is far advanced beyond anything known in the past. A very considerable portion of the education of the youth of the United States, for instance, is in the hands of female teachers. The public and private schools, the academies, high schools, ward and village schools are taught to a very large degree by women.

"Colleges for women, too, have sprung up in various States, in many of which advanced courses of instruction are pursued." More and more this characteristic of our time, and this fuller recognition of the possibilities of woman is to obtain, and who can estimate the power it has already, and is yet destined to put into her hands?

When women come so largely to shape the thought, and give impulse to the minds of a people, to mould the intellect and the heart in their most plastic state, what may we not expect, and what may we not fear if she does not herself rest on a sound moral basis? What unspoken, and what unthought-of possibilities harbor in the bosom of this mighty question; possibilities that may well appeal to all that is noble and true in womanhood, and put all who are interested in the best destiny of the race upon serious thoughtfulness.

I trust, young ladies, you realize and appreciate in some just degree the momentous issues for human destiny God has involved in your being and superior advantages. How greatly you are favored over those who wrought and fell under gloomier skies, some with the shimmer of glory on their brows, others with the blot of shame.

It will be hard for angels or men to shield you from an eternal rebuke, if with such advantages for the noblest development, and such opportunities for the sublime wrestle and triumph of your great endowment, you waste your time and strength and discrown your

womanhood in rash efforts to secure a mistaken mission, or fritter away your splendid gifts in the momentary thrill of vain pleasure, or the sillier follies of show and fashion.

But after all, resent it who may, the influence and possibilities of woman have no such field and no such illustration as in the social and domestic world. God has given her an endowment that gives her mastery in these kingdoms of moral progress, and where civilization is Christian, it is her fault if she does not reign as a queen. The forces she wields are quiet, her agency in the great movements by which the car of progress is swept on is less manifest to the senses than that of man; but on this very account when woman is what she should and may be, she is without an equal in moral force. I cannot now detain to say by how many avenues she reaches and influences society. She may indeed be, and sometimes is, its snare, its mere superficial show, its cheat, and in one, its victim and its curse. Of such women, young and those whose marred faces the tinted dust no longer reclaims, there are not a few in our day; but these do not represent the true woman of whose possibilities I am speaking—they are the merest caricatures of woman, and are as wandering stars whose borrowed light is fast waning when they shall drop behind the shadows of an immolated womanhood and a wasted life. In the midst of so much that is fruitful of evil in our day, and ominous of more, it is a pleasing reflection, and I trust to my young friends an ennobling impulse, that there are so

many noble-minded women, young and old, who stand by the troubled pool of society, and in so many ways are dropping into it the salt of purity and preservation. Take woman with her sympathy and tenderness, her purity and love, her wisdom and her beauty, her delicacy and refinement, out of society to-day, and it would be as the exclusion of every stray beam of light that steals upon and struggles through the gloom of the wilderness, or as the pouring of hot lava into every oasis in the desert. In ministries of kindness as a great impulse always, and a successful instrument often in every true reform, and as a constant testimony in her bearing, purity, and devotion, to all that is ennobling, refined, and beautiful, woman most of all is the angel that moves among us, and the arch of the sky is not so far off where her voice is heard, and her gentle touch is felt.

How much by her presence and influence she restrains, and often quenches the wild fires of the masses, how much she soothes human sorrow and alleviates human woe, we do not know. In a thousand ways she may, and in many instances she does, exalt the tone of society, and set it going on a higher plane and for a nobler end. By her great heart-love and sympathy, what miracles she has wrought!

Pushed out to the front, ordained to struggle more under the blaze of the sun and the stare of the world, men have advantage, and their names are rung on the trump of fame; but how many men have won their crown exclusive of the influence of woman? Wash-

ington was great because his mother before him was greater, and all the untold blessings throwing their beams of light down through the generations which this nation boasts, are due more to her who gave our country so symmetrical a character, than to him who struck its yoke in twain with his sword. Ruskin says: "No man ever lived a right life who had not been chastened by a woman's love, strengthened by her courage, and guided by her discretion." And then, referring to himself, he says of his wife: "Without the help of one of them, the day would probably have come before now, when I should have written and thought no more." Washington Irving says: "There is one in the world who feels for him who is sad a keener pang than he feels for himself; there is one to whom reflected joy is better than that which comes direct; there is one who rejoices in another's honor more than in in any which is one's own; there is one on whom another's transcendent excellence sheds no beam but that of delight; there is one who hides another's infirmities more faithfully than one's own; there is one who loses all sense of self in the sentiment of kindness, tenderness, and devotion to another—that one is woman."

Turning again to Mr. Ruskin, he says with great force and beauty: "You cannot think that the buckling on of the knight's armor by his lady's hand was a mere caprice of romantic fashion. It is the type of an eternal truth—that the soul's armor is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it; and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honor of manhood fails."

Ah, wasteful woman! She who may
 On her sweet self set her own price,
 Knowing he cannot choose but pay—
 How has she cheapened Paradise!
 How given for naught her priceless gift,
 How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine,
 Which, spent with due, respective thrift,
 Had made brutes men, and men divine.”

I am certain there are many who more than once have tottered to the fall, and were stayed by a hand fairer than their own, and who can appreciate the thought woven so beautifully in these lines of Mrs. Browning:

“God made woman to save man by love.
 * * * * *
 When all's done, all tried, all counted here,
 All great arts, and all good philosophies,
 This love just puts its hand out in a dream,
 And straight outstretches all things.”

These tributes might be greatly multiplied; they are only single notes sounding out of a great harmony that thrills on the heart of mankind everywhere, and they constitute a truthful and beautiful testimony to the power and possibilities of woman when she is girded for, and is achieving a purpose worthy of her.

And if these thoughts, my young friends, should not fail to inspire in men a larger respect for her—

“Whose company has harmonized mankind,
 Soften'd the rude and calmed the boisterous mind,”

neither should they fail to lead you away from all abuse of your princely endowment, and masterly sovereignty, for with a most sacred emphasis they do—

“Show us how divine a thing
A woman may be made.”

But really woman is, or may be great in society, because she is or may be great in the home. The elements that make her a queen royal by her own hearth-stone, are the forces that always have and always will make her masterly in the world. It is not an accident, not a misfortune, not a mistake, that woman so exclusively belongs to the home, and is so princely in it.

It is an ordination of God, and in contemplating the world's best destiny He founded the home, before the Capitol was thought of, or the Temple was reared. The weakest woman in the land is that “strong minded” one on whose restless lip thoughts like these whip up a curl of scorn. When women in defence of their rights, so-called, put the least slur upon the home, they insult the wisdom of Jehovah, and underrate the mightiest and the best power, so far as human agency is involved, in the progress of our civilization to-day. The thunder has great faculty for roar and rumble; woman can make more noise outside, but mere noise is often lost in the echo it has started. Love and purity, faith and godliness are quiet forces, but resistless as the roll of the planets; home is the centre, the throbbing heart of these. Here woman has her throne, and here as no where, and as no other, she holds in her hands and enshrines in her heart the moral destiny of the race. In these closing words I can give you but a hint of woman's influence and possibilities in the home.

Right here in the home, and because woman is the ordained keeper of it, fitted as she is by nature, and as she may be by culture and grace to fulfill its divine prerogatives; right here, by your hearth-stone and mine, is embosomed as God's own awful trust, the glory of the State, the hope of the Church, and the destiny of the world.

Woman makes home, and home should be, may be, in many instances is, the divinest altar, the sweetest rest on the way to heaven. The greatest moral force on earth to-day, so far as such force is illustrated in human beings, is the force that distills like sweet fragrance from a woman's heart on her throne in the home.

Dr. Holland does not say all that can be said, when in speaking of home, he observes: "Of this realm woman is the queen. It takes its cue and its hue from her. If she is in the best sense womanly—if she is true and tender, loving and heroic, patient and self-devoted—she consciously or unconsciously organizes and puts in operation a set of influences that do more to mould the destiny of the nation than any man, uncrowned by power or eloquence, can possibly effect. The men of the nation are what their mother's make them, as a rule; and the voice which those men speak in the expression of their power is the voice of the women who bore and bred them. There can be no substitute for this. There is no other possible way in which the women of the nation can organize their influence and power that will tell so beneficently upon

society and the State. * * * As a nation we rise or fall as the character of our homes, presided over by woman, rises or falls; and the best gauge of our best prosperity is to be found in the measure by which these homes find multiplication in the land." The necessity of reform as a matter of self-preservation, as well as personal salvation, is a problem that is stirring the heart of good men and women everywhere to-day. Many agencies and forces are being set in motion to effect it, and for present emergency they are needed, but I must say, and the assertion challenges contradiction, that woman has more to do in effecting this need than any other, and as I confidently believe, it is not woman in the legislature nor at the ballot-box, but woman, royal, queenly, godly in the home. The women of power to-day are not those who are on the war-path, pleading an injured innocence, and demanding rights of which they claim the sex is unjustly deprived, but those, who, beginning in the home, are seen in all good and gracious ministries, and secure to themselves first the approval of God, and then such testimony from mankind as John Quincy Adams proudly bore to his mother when he said: "All I am, my mother made me."

Let the women of this land put its homes to the full measure of their divine endowment rescued of God, where they alone can put them, and not only the prosperity, but the salvation of the nation is secured.

I have spoken within moderation, and now, if you still ask what is the scope of woman's influence and

possibilities, I can only answer, that when woman is girded as God comes to gird her, the great thought leaps over into infinity. Oh! the illimitableness of which you are capable! In the beings you are, and in the wide and varied mission to which you have been appointed, what a throne God has set for you; what a sceptre He has put into your hands; what a crown of glory He has lifted to your brow! I trust you have already come to the coronation such a kingdom challenges, and if not, that you solemnly realize that you cannot honor such a distinction save through the renewal and inspiration of Him who shed His blood for you, and who infinitely above the best of your kind is the model you are to follow.

If woman when truly womanly, when her own love and faith are cleansed and kindled by the grace of Christ, is capable of achieving so much, what may she not do on the side of sin and folly, beset as she is with their well-nigh endless temptation and opportunity?

I have sought to inspire you, knowing that you have but to think and look about you to find ample illustration of my thought in the fallen and misapplied faculties of woman.

The influence and possibilities of woman in the wastes, and crimes, and woes of society are sadly manifest to-day, and they would furnish a chapter which must needs be written, if true to the life, in such dark hues as I do not covet, and I trust none of you will ever deepen.

You must perceive that such forces as belong to you, if perverted, and swept out in channels of evil, can only issue in results most dreadful to contemplate, and that the best hopes of mankind lie largely in the best moral culture of woman.

I make no protest against those proper means of home and social culture, those adornments and refinements which come along with an advanced civilization, neither do I object to you getting noble impulse from the natural graces of those about you, or even from the social improvement manifest from time to time in yourselves; but all that is not sufficient. You need a higher standard than you can have in your own attainments, or in the character of others, because your possibilities demand, and God is calling you to a sublimer ideal than the best type of cultured and refined womanhood can furnish. You need Jesus Christ. Only He who exalted woman in His incarnation, illustrated her best being and truest mission in His life, and redeemed her on the cross, can mould, inspire, and ennoble her as she needs.

The true woman-soul looks forth from the eyes of Christ. Let your loving trust catch the glance, and as you hold it, may the divine image of your Lord be lastingly imprinted on your soul. He alone fills the scope of your possibilities, and He alone can help you to grasp and fill the celestial vision.

“If thou turn thy thoughts
Upon thyself, even for that great sake
Of purity, and conscious whiteness’ self

Thou wilt but half succeed. The other half
Is to forget the first, and all thyself,
Quenching thy moonlight in the blaze of day,
Turning thy full being unto thy God.
Be thou in Him a pure, twice holy child,
Doing the right with sweet unconsciousness,
Having God in thee thy completed soul."



CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIANITY AND WOMAN.

“Not she with trait’rous kiss the Saviour stung,
Not she denied him with unholy tongue;
She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave,
Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave.”

THE subject to which this chapter has been set apart is certainly one of the most thrilling and instructive that can challenge the thought of any noble and enlightened mind.

Its fullest investigation will furnish, to all who care to undertake it, such an interpretation of the endowment and mission of woman, as well as such a stirring illustration of God’s march in the world, as can scarce be found in any other one fact in human history. To a superficial view, this will appear an extreme statement; but if we will go back to the beginning of the new order in Christendom, and trace the earlier battles and the first triumphs of the Christian faith, and follow that master achievement of moral progress which has been steady and earnest as the angel in the Apocalypse, flying through the heavens, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations, we will not fail to be convinced that this subject involves far more than a simple statement of facts concerning woman, or the revelation of any distinct relationship she may sustain to time and events.

I think it well to give an intimation like this, that sober thought may be stimulated in you, and so wiser conclusions be reached; for manifestly much is said and done to-day in behalf of woman which indicates a thoughtlessness wholly unworthy so noble a cause.

Christianity and woman is a subject that challenges most serious and even devout reflection from all, especially from you who stand related to God's great overture and kingdom in the world as no others do.

This much you owe to a system whose appeal you have no right to set aside without test and the hearing of testimony; and you owe it as well to the best elements and hopes of your being.

Here is a subject that enshrines in itself great reaches of truth, great facts of human history, many of which come to us to-day as an important revelation or as a significant prophecy, and here are great wastes and great springs of civilization, and altogether, we are furnished an instructive and unanswerable testimony to the truth of the Christian faith on the one hand, and to the capabilities and true mission of woman on the other.

I am certain that the woman who with love and purity in her heart, and God's own illumination in her mind, has gone to the bottom of this problem, and has been able to see hanging on the retreating cloud the bow with which God's love has spanned the life and destiny of her sex, and standing under its emerald arch is thrilled with gratitude and moved to highest endeavor, this woman is by odds the best qualified to instruct, to inspire, and to ennoble her kind.

Marvellously, indeed, has the nature and life of woman been interblended with the purpose and progress of our Christian faith. You can no more write the history of Christianity, either with respect to the necessity, the method, or the progress of it, without woman, than you can write the history of the fall without her. Neither can you secure the best interpretation of her gifts, nor of her high and holy vocation, nor of her noblest destiny, without Christianity.

Here she is to be seen as in a glass, in all the beautiful scope of her being, and in all the princely vision of her appointment, as nowhere else.

One of the saddest and blackest pages in the world's history is that which records the degradation of woman; and the gloomy hues in which it is written never come out with such distinctness as when the blaze and beauty of Christian faith are set over against them.

The contrast is most appalling on the one hand, and most delightful on the other, when viewed between the poles of her ruin and redemption.

To form a correct estimate of this subject, it will not answer to affirm simply what Christianity has done for woman, for there be many who would question such statement, and attribute the elevation of woman to other agencies than that of Gospel grace and faith. We must go back and discover the condition of woman without Christianity, and under other systems, some of which made a large pretense of reform, but are either wholly abandoned to-day, or have fallen into

hopeless discredit, from the unanswerable verdict of their own ineffectual achievements.

It is the boast of Christianity that it shrinks from no fair test, and its glory that it can endure any.

Respecting the condition of woman without the Gospel, there is no need for conjecture, and no chance for exaggeration; on the other hand, the veil of seclusion must be thrown upon much that once marred her face and blasted her hope, as too forbidding for public gaze or utterance. Still we may turn the curtain so much aside as to give you some measurement of the contrast between woman's condition under the dominion of Paganism and under the reign of Christianity, and so produce, I trust, as well some forcible testimony in behalf of the Cross by whose magic charm she has been lifted up to the image that was without blot of sin or guilt, and assigned to a mutual ministry with the angels of God.

After its contest with Judaism, the first battle of Christianity was with the Paganism of the Roman empire, so formidable because so interblended with imperial power and institutions. The pitiable condition of woman in this vast kingdom, is a fair picture, at least in the moral sense, of her condition everywhere and ever since, where the influence of the Gospel has not penetrated the darkness. Her degradation extended to all the faculties and functions of her being. There was no such recognition of her as would in the least indicate her high origin, or that she was at all capable of any end worthy the being God had given her.

She was not esteemed as a rational soul, as the embodiment of elements and forces that only needed renewal and culture to show that God had garnished them. She was regarded as a mere thing, employed as a victim, and only elevated for a display that blushed to the heavens. Under Roman law, a husband was far more a tyrant than a companion, and the wife far more a slave than an honored help-meet. She had no legal, and certainly no moral sway over her own children; there was nothing to respond to the holy and tender appeal of parental instincts; and woman perished in all the sublime and distinguishing traits of her nature. The husband could appoint her to death if he chose, and of her property he had absolute control. Once in the clutch of him upon whom Christianity enjoins the purest love and highest respect for her who is to share his fortunes and his woes, she had no rights which were not subject to his cruel and arbitrary dominance. Did she earn anything?—the spending belonged to him, and with such a heartless and godless dominion, he availed himself of the results of her toil. There was a low contempt for royal woman, the reflex influence of which could not but be degrading in the extreme. Her opinion was worth nothing, and the deeply inlaid sensibilities of her queenly self could not, in all their ruin, have entirely failed to feel the sting of such unmanly reproach.

Nor is it any better in heathen countries now, where the Gospel has not come with its liberative proclama-

tion. Every one sufficiently interested in this subject to read the record, or to listen to the testimony of those who have a right to speak, is aware that it is a characteristic, a cardinal principle of heathenism to degrade woman. Her great nature, lying in its hopeless ruin, offers the temptation, and where depravity is the law, the strong always rule the weak. "No Hindoo woman," says Williams, "has in theory any independence. It is not merely that she is not her own mistress; she is not her own property, and never under any circumstances can be. She belongs to her father first, who gives her away to her husband, to whom she belongs *forever*."

But demoralizing as such unjust disability is, it is slight compared with the moral despotism and degeneracy, which in the very nature of the case, must attend such a condition of civil and physical servitude.

The page here is an abyss, and the black tinge which the Apostle gives to it in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans is not extreme. The waves of moral corruption that surged through the gates of the Roman empire infected the whole world, and bore on their black crests all that was noble, and beautiful, and pure in woman. Where or when has it been otherwise, where paganism has reared its Molochs, and in human beings found its victims?

On all this awful page whose full and foul record I dare not read, woman is the most revolting blot; not because she is the worst, but because she is woman. It must ever be so, where God and his Gospel are ig-

nored; for the debasement of woman is in proportion to her greatness, and from such a height how deep the fall must be! A recent writer, speaking of that time, says: "Modesty was held to be a presumption of ugliness."

Even Seneca was shocked, and stigmatized woman "as a foolish, wild creature, unable to control her lusts." The marriage tie was without sanctity, and the words wife, family, home, and mother, were only suggestive of bondage, corruption, and bitter sorrow. Society was unclean at the fountains, and its every throb sent out from the home the most polluted streams, seeming to vie with one another in hastening the debauchery of the empire.

The excesses were fearful to contemplate both in character and degree, and these had impulse both from the philosophy and the religion of the times. Seneca says: "All things are full of iniquity and vice. More crimes are committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of wickedness is carried on. Daily the lust of sin increases; daily the sense of shame diminishes. * * * So public has iniquity become, so mightily does it flame up in all hearts, that innocence is no longer rare; it has ceased to exist." There is no better test of the moral condition and tendency of an age, or of a nation, than the esteem in which it holds woman, the marriage relation and the home, and while in the darkest times and among the lowest people there always have been noble exceptions, yet, in Greece and in Rome, under the dominion of heath-

enism, as in its gross darkness to-day, these exceptions were rare. "This much is certain, that married and domestic life were widely corrupted and destroyed, and a lawlessness and dissoluteness prevailed which far exceeded even the worst which is presented by our large cities of to-day."

Coming down to a like moral darkness in a later time, a Hindoo convert, speaking of those who are still immersed in the darkness of heathenism, says: "True love does rarely grace the connubial life of the Hindoo. The children do not know what innocent, social comforts are. Vice with its thousand branches twines round their lives. Faithlessness to the married relation, discord between and separation of two who are strictly required to be one, are the defective features of Hindoo families in general." And may I not confidently appeal to you, that just this is the fact wherever woman has not been elevated by the direct or indirect influence of the Gospel. It is just as true in the benighted portions of our own city as it once was in Pagan Rome, and is now in the jungles of Africa, in the hovels of China, or on the sunlit plains of India.

It needs not that I continue this sad tale, all the sadder because the ruin is still so wide-spread; still, at home and abroad, woman is degraded without the Gospel, often in the guilt of her character, and always in the depressing limitations put upon her; and if you have hearts to listen and ears to hear, you need scarce turn about to hear in these lines a gifted poetess puts

into the mouth of Eve, the wail that now and again struggles up from beneath the waste of woman's moral disability :

“ Alas me ! alas,
Who have undone myself from all that best,
Fairest and sweetest, to this wretchedest,
Saddest and most defiled. * * * For I who lived
Beneath the wings of angels yesterday,
Wander to-day beneath a roofless world.”

Such is a faint description of woman's limitation and degradation without the Gospel, and certainly the half is not told ; and should I lift all the covering from this bottomless pit—a seething, abysmal abyss of cruelty, corruption, and woe—you would fly from the disclosure as from the taint of a plague. If this will stir in you a larger faith in and a more manifest devotion to the truth, this meagre recital may suffice, until you are able to grasp it hidden in its silence and darkness, as it is caught up in the transfiguring light of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

With all our boast of liberty, of wealth, and of culture, if woman is to come to her true coronation, if she is to fill her sublime mission, as God by her own endowment and His specific ordination designs she should, I see no hope for her, exclusive of the Gospel. This is the testimony of the past, the lesson which Christianity has written upon the page of history ; the unanswerable proof of the fact is no longer an assertion, no longer the pretense of a system—it is a demonstration, strong and distinct as the stars that illumine

the sky; and no woman is true to herself, true to her kind, or true to her God, who does not accept and act upon the divinely-inscribed verdict.

But all this will come to you with a more impressive and beautiful emphasis, as we turn over the page of history, and read on that side so flushed with celestial light, something of the triumphs of Christianity in behalf of woman.

In accomplishing this purpose, it will be as fair as I trust it will be forcible, to retrace our steps and see if we cannot bring away some trophies from those times where the degradation of woman was most complete, and seemingly most hopeless. Surely, if Christianity could win over the mastery of paganism, and if, alone, it did rescue and enthrone woman where the darkness was gross and the bondage and corruption were terrible, we need not blush for our faith, nor despair of the moral destiny of the race. It is not without significance that the dawn of Christianity had in it the halo of woman's devotion and love. The first crown it conferred was upon woman. Unless woman can be saved, the regeneration of society, and the redemption of the world, are hopeless. It is given to her, as to no other, to correct the wrong she wrought in Eden, and in this wide and weary world to make ample room for Him in whom she finds at once her exemplar and ideal. Very striking, and equally beautiful, is woman's relation to Christ and Christianity; and it is not strange that in the beginning her rescue from the depths was made so specific a ministry of Him who went about

doing good. First, it was His purpose greatly to exalt her by suffering Himself to be born of her; and then, to illustrate in all time His untold love and sympathy, by being born in her, the hope of glory. It is a weak pretext when one, in order to disparage Christianity, attributes the elevation of woman to other agencies than Christ and the Gospel. Such an effort can only be maintained at the sacrifice of fair reasoning and truthful testimony. Other means have been made subservient to this great end, but only as they have been suggested and directed by Christianity. There can be no moral reform and promotion apart from truth; and Jesus Christ brought this savory salt with Him, and cast it into the putrid mass of a fallen world, and the tree of life found an Eden again in which to bloom. It is a falsification of the stubborn facts of history, and a disregard of much experience worthy of respect, to affirm that culture is sufficient alone to elevate woman.

Greece had culture, the culture of thought and skill; but it was like the flowers that bloom on a grave, only good to conceal a loathsome corruption within. When Athens was the boast of the civilized world, she was vile in her social fountains. Woman was debased. "Plato represents a state as wholly disorganized, where slaves are disobedient to their masters, and wives are on an equality with their husbands. Aristotle characterizes women as beings of an inferior kind. Family life, in the true meaning of the words, the Greek did not know. He was at home as little as possible, and sought happiness elsewhere than at his own

hearth." This is a hint of woman's condition where culture, without grace, was supreme. India has culture, but poor woman is not only none the better, but actually all the worse for it; for the consciousness of it, in a heathen, only magnifies his contempt for the slave who crouches at his feet.

And do we not know that in our own day, culture without grace is often but a strong appeal to female vanity, and is frequently made to throw off in a more bluish glare those wastes and follies and improprieties so discreditable to true womanhood. Culture is good, and if married to religion it too may come to woman's coronation, but alone it is powerless to rescue and enthrone her. The Cross is the only power that has ever been able to cleanse and sweeten the springs of her being, and to cause them to flow again in streams clear as crystal, and refreshing as the river of God.

When the angel of the Gospel spread his white wings over the Roman empire, her fetters began to fall off, and she stood up once more, beautiful and great, in the image of God.

Under the spirit and teaching of Jesus, those distinctions which bartered in human blood, and wove their coronal of vanity and tyranny from human rights, vanished as stars before the curtain of the storm, and woman beheld in man a brother, a husband, and a friend. "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female"—we are one whole humanity, with advantage of beauty and glory on the side of woman.

Under the wondrous spell of the Gospel, the entire civil and physical relation of woman was changed, and legislation, by statutes more humane and just, recognized and guarded the distinction the Gospel gave her; and no longer the slave and the victim of despotic rule, she became what God made her to be—"the glory of the man."

The recognition of woman as a noble and superior being, securing to her the highest respect, and every right to which her being and mission entitle her, began with the Gospel—began where her degradation was completest; and only when the Gospel and its spirit and teachings have been set aside, has woman fallen from that height to which our Lord exalted her in the beginning.

That light by which the heathenism of Pagan Rome was unmasked, and then blotted out, shot its beams down through the generations, and its glow is brighter to-day than ever, and one of the distinguishing features of our Christian civilization is the high regard in which woman is held.

Judge Kent correctly observes: "The preëminence of the Christian nations in Europe, and of their descendants and colonists in every quarter of the globe, is most strikingly displayed in the equality and dignity which their institutions confer upon the female character."

The author of that recent and excellent work entitled, "Gesta Christi," says: "The influence of the great friend of humanity was especially seen in the

Roman empire, * * * in bringing on a new legislation of beneficence in favor of the outcast woman. * * * For the first time the stern and noble features of Roman law took on an unwonted expression of gentle humanity and sweet compassion, under the power of Him who was the brother of the unfortunate and the sinful."

So wonderful and so revolutionary was the triumph of the truth, that it became the continual reproach of the early foes of the Christians that they exalted woman to so commanding a dignity. From the first, woman was honored with place in the Church; and why not? since from the ranks of women the first converts came, and by her lips the Gospel of the resurrection was first preached. By this divinely appointed rescue and exaltation of woman, Christ and the Apostles have "given the keynote to all modern civilization;" and of all, it becomes woman most to sound it on until it becomes to the world as a psalm of God.

With such a recognition of woman's nature and rights, her moral and social elevation could not but follow. Immediately a new appeal and impulse came to her, and as never before she made becoming response to the noble in her.

Until the light of the Gospel was let in upon the darkness of the world, woman had little disposition, and certainly no noble incentive, to illustrate her great faculties of heart and soul. With no noble conception of womanhood, with no coronal of sanctity and love about the marriage relation, with no thought of her

being and mission above the leaden aspirations of a drudge or a slave, she loathed her ruin, not knowing nor caring that her very degradation was the musty mantle that concealed a glory far more than human. The moral elevation of woman, and the development and illustration of her higher faculties, especially of that "crown jewel" of her being, her heart's devotion and love, waited on Christianity; and with an unparalleled beauty, when the light of a new life fell upon them, they bore a testimony which was a spectacle to the angels, and has embalmed the name of woman in an immortality as sublime as it is enduring. That devotion of the woman who was a sinner, when she braved the selfish reproach of those who stood nearer but were farther from the Master than she, that she might break upon Him the alabaster box, was more than once repeated, when the victory of the Cross was not always without the baptism of human blood. Women redeemed from such thralldom as is unknown to you whom I address, in the glad fervor of their new-found joy assumed readily the high responsibilities for which God had so well fitted them, and toiled, and suffered, and died for the promotion of the Gospel, with a love and a zeal that might well bring a blush, and I trust will come at least as a holy impulse to you of these brighter, but scarce less needy times. Behold woman in that awful degradation in which the Gospel found her, see the limitation by which she was hampered, mark the waste and ruin of heathen superstition and tyranny, and in a later time, the folly and vanity of

which she has been, and is yet in so many instances the victim, and then, before the waving palm that was pierced for her, behold her emerging from this darkness, crowned and girded anew of God, and moving about in society, in the home, and in the Church, in all blessed and beautiful ministries, and what a testimony to the truth, and what a Gospel to you who have looked often enough at your own, but it may be never into the face of Jesus! This picture was realized in the early conquest of the Christian faith.

The wives and daughters of the early converts shared their toil, and when their choice was between the despised Cross or life without it, womanhood, ennobled by grace, waved its palm before the gates of light, while "they paled not before the ferocious beasts in the amphitheatre, and calmly bent their necks to the sword." This is the womanhood Christianity produced; and though the test be different, it can furnish numerous examples of a like devotion to Christ to-day.

I have said you cannot write the history of Christianity without according to woman a large and honored place in it. This is especially true when we come to speak of the triumphs of the Cross. Ulhorn, in speaking of the triumphs of the Christian faith in the Roman empire, bears this just testimony to the women of that time: "As mothers who trained for the Church its standard-bearers, as deaconesses in the service of mercy, as martyrs who vied with men for the immortal crown, serving everywhere, praying, toiling, endur-

ing, women shared in the great conflict, and to them surely, in no small degree, was the victory due."

Thus, with Christianity began that elevation and moral power of woman which has in all time been both an element in and evidence of the progress of the best civilization of mankind. First and last woman's best life, interblended as it is with the best hope of the race, is rooted in the Gospel, and with all the changes and revolutions that have swept the ages, or are yet to come, the strong and tender embrace which the new faith threw about woman, still enclasps her, and by her own devotion and effort more than ever, the same glad life and hope are to cleanse and thrill the hearts of Eve's wayward daughters.

Now with such an elevation of woman, there came of course an enlargement of her mission. In Christian lands and communities, and only in such, has she welcome sway in all that will minister to her own good, and to the ennobling of the race. There is no noble and beautiful thing for which God has given her endowment, she may not do. As she is up in the great faculties of the soul, she becomes queenly in every sphere whose gates open to her, and so vast has her influence become in all that is good and beautiful, that faith catching the light of the cross which beams from and about her, brushes away the clouds of doubt, and the mists of evil prophecy, and beholds the brighter light in which He is coming, who has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Woman has now, much, very much

to answer for, but her healthful, holy ministry to-day, is a distinction of the time, and is due to Christianity as to nothing else. She leads the nation to-day in all the higher and more useful aims and labors.

The sentiment of modesty so universal in all civilized communities, the safeguards to virtue, and that unsullied amethyst of female character, I mean purity of thought and person, are due, if not wholly, certainly first and most to Christianity. Whence but from the Gospel could ever have come the thought and ideal of the Christian family, the loveliest and the happiest ideal the world has ever known?

You know what the family meant to the Roman, what it is now to the heathen, and what it can only be to those who have no God among us, and what it is to such as have planted it where God would have it, hard by the gates of heaven. I am sure it is not the fault of Christianity if our homes are not the safest asylums for our offspring, and the holiest shrines of all that is good and beautiful—a bower where angels may come, and through which the soft cadences of heavenly music may often murmur.

“For all there is of divinity and sweetness in the one word *home*, for this—to an extent which we can hardly realize—we are indebted to Christianity alone.” It must be true, as was remarked in the beginning, that there are great reaches of truth in this subject, and I apprehend that the young women of this land, as they enter into the wealth of their heritage, but faintly appreciate their immense indebtedness to Christianity. I

have barely touched the garment's hem of privilege and blessing it has conferred upon you.

If Christianity has done so much for you, what do you owe to it? Owe to it? Ask what you owe to Him who gave you being, or to Him who has brought you redemption out of the bosom of His bleeding love. There is no language, no vast sum of figures, by which you can answer this question. Easier could you estimate your indebtedness to the loving bosom on which you reposed your infant head, and by whose watchful and unwearied affection your steps were attended until the portal of womanhood parted before you, than you can ever tell what you owe to God's great overture in Jesus Christ. You can best answer this question by your devotion to your Lord than by any words you can command; and when you have given like the widow, and ministered like Mary, and prayed like the distressed mother for her child, you may still cast your crown at the feet of Jesus as the tribute of a love and gratitude you owe to Him now, and will owe forever and ever.

It will be well and enough if by an illumination all divine and welcome to your grateful soul you see in such benediction as Christ has brought to you, that the full revelation of which only the unsullied light of eternity can disclose, and that meanwhile it appeals to and merits your heartiest devotion, in such degree as to render all scorn of it a crime of blackest hue. Oh, think of a woman with the strongest tendrils of her heart entwined about the gay, dusty god of this world,

with her knee bent at the gaudy shrine of fashion, her highest object of worship, herself, or, that which is still less worthy, her royal gifts all perverted, and offered as incense upon unhallowed altars, and with her back upon the Son of God, who condescended to become the Son of Mary! I can think of no ingratitude that can match that, of no wrong so grievous to your Saviour, or so disreputable and perilous to yourself. Can you?

What do you owe to Christianity? What do you not owe to it?

What a charge it has committed to you! How eminently you are called to be co-workers with God! I insist upon it that the best hope of the world is intrusted to you as to no other. Rise to the dignity of your better self, to the high call of your responsibility and privilege, and to the touch of God. Lay the diadem of your being and life at the feet of Him to whom you owe everything, and fresh and beautiful as a rose in the sun-light of the morning, with the dew of God's love and peace upon you, go forth to bless the world that so much needs you, and to show to angels and men the sublime image of a true womanhood, in the image of Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you. The perfection of womanhood is Christ. Touch His sceptre, and He will crown you; and you may rise

“As Mary rose at Jesus' word,
Redeemed and white before her Lord.”

CHAPTER IV.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES VIEWED FROM A MORAL AND SOCIAL STAND-POINT.

Could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain, whose dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference :
Yet in the longer years liker must they grow ;
The man be more of woman, she of man ;
He gain in sweetness, and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world ;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care ;
More as the doubled-natured poet each ;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words. *(Tennyson.)*

YOU will bear me witness that thus far in these discourses I have sought to ennoble woman, and to stimulate you whom I especially address to noble endeavor, by according to your sex that sublime dignity which your Creator has set upon you, and of which the past and the present furnish so many and such illustrious examples. And, now, in the vexed question of woman's rights and privileges, I come not to add in any wise, to any disability that may yet hamper her noblest progress, but to clear away what in my humble judgment is a violation of her being, and if imposed would only tend to embarrass her noblest endeavor

and blast her brightest hopes. There is no impulse of envy back of the feeling with which I am constrained to protest against woman's desire to push her privilege beyond a legitimate limit; on the other hand I have a sense of regret in finding myself at variance on this question, with many men as well as women, who are entitled to universal respect.

Some thoughts have been advanced on both sides of this question, and by both sexes, which have not proven to be worthy testimony in behalf of the problem, one way or the other, and which were not a flattering commendation of those who conceived them; but every great movement involving so much of social revolution, is subject more or less to views that are unwholesome and erratic, and it would be marvellous if one such as this should escape such an infliction. The question involves so much as to be paramount in importance, and is worthy of consideration both careful and candid.

It is folly to ridicule woman because she thinks she is entitled to and should have the ballot, and it is only acknowledged weakness to berate those who honestly differ with her, and judge her effort in this regard rash, and fatal to the noblest character and function of womanhood. Calm and thoughtful discussion will do much to settle this question, and when so settled we shall stand upon a common platform; but dull wit, coarse slang, untempered speech, and the bluster and sentiment of mistaken men and masculine women, will only serve to weaken the cause, and to put the day of

harmonious adjustment very far off. The question involves far more than many imagine; let us look at it calmly, thoughtfully, and with a desire not so much to win a victory as to ascertain the truth.

The burden of the question seems to turn upon the one point of suffrage. Shall woman be promoted to the full functions of citizenship, and be invested with the ballot? Her right to this privilege is emphasized not so much always with force of argument as with vehemence of disposition and abundance of epithets, but it is not so much a question of simple right as an equal with man, but is it wise? is it best? is it a note of harmony in the fitness of things? Candidly, I think not. He is dull who cannot see, and he has not the best destiny of the race at heart who does not rejoice in the fact that the unmistakable trend of the age is to the enlargement of the sphere of woman; this is clearly one of the bright lights in the sweep of God's providence, and one of the great forces in the progress of the world; but remember that this enlargement of woman's sphere does not contemplate any violation of the laws of her being, nor any addition to the high mission which her own nature clearly defines. The enlargement of woman's scope of action comes in good part from her enlarged capacity. She wields more power to-day, because her faculties, especially under the influence of Christianity, have been greatly developed, and she has in herself more power to wield. Whatever woman is capable of doing well, of doing so as to be a blessing in the doing of it, whatever by

divine appointment she is qualified to do, that she may do, and in the progress of the world that is the scope of her grand mission.

I believe she will, and should advance just as far and just as fast as she can master what comes before her, but in that mastery I have no thought that she should infringe upon those great laws as fixed and as radiant in her womanhood, as the stars in the sky. Indeed, I think experience already proves, that she must fail, the moment she oversteps the deep-cut lines which God has indicated in the being she is.

In so far as women in this agitation put in a plea for an equal chance with men, where they have the call and the endowment for a like service—an equal amount of pay for what they do when they do as much and do it as well, in this far they are right, and it is simple injustice to resist them. It is a moral wrong if not an outrage to expect a woman in the school, in the office, in the store, to do what men do, in quality and quantity equal, for one-third less pay, than men receive.

But I have no thought that giving woman the ballot is the cure-all for these wrongs, and she who seeks to redress them by ringing her voice in this confused clamor will die without helping her kind. It is not the ballot that can ever regulate the price of labor so much as the sway of the just principles of Christianity, and capacity in the toiler. If woman is fitted for the work she has chosen, she can far better quench this injustice, and so lift up an inspiring standard for her

sisters, by efficiency. After all, it is not doing something, not claiming to be able to do something, but doing it well, that commands and compels just remuneration.

Wherever woman may exercise the faculties of heart and brain and skill, she may herself, she must determine whether the work is fitted to her, and of what worth she is in it. All the demonstration and denunciation of the platform, all the ringing of the changes on woman's rights from now until the end of time, will not settle it. These lines from the gifted author of *Aurora Leigh* strikingly illustrate the thought, and you will feel the emphasis the more because the writer is a woman.

“A woman cannot do the thing she ought,
Which means whatever perfect thing she can,
In life, in art, in science, but she fears
To let the perfect action take her part
And rest there: she must prove what she can do
Before she does it—prate of woman's rights,
Of woman's mission, woman's function, till
The men (who are prating too on their side) cry,
'A woman's function plainly is—to talk.'

* * * * *

By speaking we prove only we can speak:
Which he, the man here, never doubted. What
He doubts is whether we can *do* the thing
With decent grace we've not yet done at all.
Now, do it; bring your statue—you have room!
He'll see it even by the starlight here;
And if 'tis e'er so little like the god
Who looks out from the marble silently
Along the track of his own shining dart

Through the dust of ages—there's no need to speak;
The universe shall henceforth speak for you,
And witness, 'She who did this thing was born
To do it—claims her license in her work.'
And so with more works."

It is not for men or systems to determine the functions and capacity of woman; God has settled that in the sublime ordination of faculty and of privilege He has put upon her; and when she apprehends and qualifies herself for her place, she will, nobly has she shown the world what she can do; but men, comprehending her peculiar being, and seeing her beautiful mastery in it, may see and should guard the lines that define her wide mission, that there be no jar nor wreck on the way to her splendid destiny.

But some women say they can and should be allowed to vote.

Yes, if voting only meant the depositing of a bit of paper in the ballot-box, I have no doubt she could do it with more grace, and with as wise discrimination perhaps as man; but the right to vote means vastly more than that.

The question of woman suffrage is really not to determine so much what woman can or cannot do, but what she is to be. It is a question that involves a radical change in her social life and relationship. If according the ballot to woman is to be more than a mere optional privilege, it means a change in her very being, in her whole life, that is equivalent to a transfiguration; and that would not be bad but for the fact

that it would be a transfiguration not from darkness to light, but from light to darkness.

If we are to have any regard for the logic of this unseemly promotion of woman, it means the functions of citizenship in all their masculine breadth and length. Are women ready to assume the responsibilities that logically follow such a revolution in the social and political kingdoms?

Is she ready to become a citizen as man is a citizen? Unquestionably the act of voting carries with it the function of ruling. Political privilege not only implies the responsibility, but the capacity for civil duty—civil duty not in one place, but in all places—in the club and star-mailed ranks of the police, as well as in the jury-box; on the battle-field, as well as in the peace commission. It may be said that all this is not contemplated in securing the ballot for woman; yes, but all this is logically involved in it. It is not proposed to give woman the ballot as a star is pinned on a warrior's breast, as an adornment to her excellencies, or a reward for her devotion. It means that henceforward she shall not be represented by another, but that she shall assume and exercise the functions of citizenship herself; in other words, it means that there shall be such a change in the functions and life of woman as will be equivalent to a revolution—a revolution that practically blots the glory from her womanhood, and henceforward makes her more a man than a woman. One of the noblest and most gifted advocates of woman's proper rights and privileges was Miss Phœbe

Cary. Her biographer says, "She believed it to be the human right of every woman to develop the power that God has given her, and to fulfill her destiny as a human creature—free as man is free. Yet, it was in woman *as* woman that she believed. * * * What she longed to see educated to a finer and fuller supremacy in woman was feminine, not masculine strength." I could only venture to quote the following lines from one of her poems, which in so sprightly a way fixes the seal to what I have said, because they are the lines of so royal a woman :

"Don't mistake me ; I mean that the public's not home,
 You must do as the Romans do when you're in Rome ;
 I would have you be womanly while you are wise ;
 'Tis the weak and the womanish tricks I despise.
 * * * * * * *
 'Tis a good thing to write, and to rule in the state,
 But to be a true, womanly woman is great ;
 And if ever you come to be that, 'twill be when
 You can cease to be children, nor try to be men."

Right here, in woman herself, I find the first and most serious difficulty in the way of female suffrage. If the inevitable results of it are to be taken into account, if there be any truth and lesson in the philosophy of it, it contemplates and will necessitate such a change in the constitution and life of woman as must violate the beautiful ordination God conferred upon her at her creation. It is idle, it is not honest, to attempt any fair discussion of this question without making becoming response to the emphatic challenge of sex. It may be ignored on the one hand, or

scorned on the other, as an allusion betraying man's weakness, or beneath a woman's dignity; still God's wise and beautiful law stands—"male and female created He them," and as such they are appointed to do their work, and to attain to their separate destinies. In far more ways than I can suggest at this time, the ballot in the very nature of the case must infringe upon those delicate functions of sex which when not abused nor blasted are the glory of woman. If the ballot were universally adopted (and of what avail if it only become a dead letter in the code of the nation), it needs no extraordinary penetration to perceive how, with its demands, its excitements, its ambitions, and last, but not least, its corruption, could not fail to weave about woman a net-work in which most of all her highest and most royal endowment would become sadly, if not shamefully, entangled.

"Her sex is the unalterable decree which she can cast no ballot to vote away from her, and assume no profession to raze it from the eternal tablet of her distinction." The character and functions of woman interweave with the very basis of society, and they must be maintained as a general law, as God's own wise arrangement, and when they are violated harm comes to all, but most of all to woman.

Whether in the spheres of labor or of privilege, the law of sex does make a distinction, and upon that distinction it is not only affirmed, but illustrated, that there is one glory of the man and another glory of the woman. I am persuaded that the ballot in the true

length and breadth of its meaning would throw a shadow on that glory, if it would not quite blot it out; hence, I take upon my lips again the lines of a royal woman, and say to every woman's soul that would be womanly:

"Beat purer, heart, and higher,
Till God unsex thee on the heavenly shore,
Where unincarnate spirits pure aspire."

But in this matter there is more in the way than any special appointment of God, peculiar exclusively to sex.

It will be wise to consider what the moral tendency of such a revolution will be, and how it must needs affect woman's relationship. Much is promised to woman in these particulars, when she has grown more man-like in the gift of the ballot, but there is more of fallacy in these promises than truth.

Experience does not sustain them, and the "unfortunate women" who have not yet risen to the dignity of voting, are not wasting under the bondage of limitation and debasement.

The attributes of sex belong to the soul as well as to the body; and while men and women possess much in common, yet in their physical, in their intellectual and spiritual nature, there is abundant distinction to constitute marked difference. Man has no preference to the disadvantage of woman, and woman has none to the disadvantage of man; each in place is great, and they only can diminish in beauty and power, as they infringe the one upon the empire of the other.

When woman wrestles against the purpose of God in her creation, and in the march of His providence that she may stand with man in the civil privileges and duties of life, then is she infringing upon an empire that does not belong to her, and while she fails to make man greater or better thereby, she will not fail to make herself less. She has a delicacy and beauty of presence, graces and charms of person and bearing, intuitive affinities for the true, the pure and the good, she has a divine faculty of counsel, an influence often masterful over the worst obstacles, a sympathy tender as an angel's, a love like unto God's,—these are hers in a sense man may not claim them, and she has no right to waste or diminish the glow of one of them, by making herself “a numerical factor in the political economy.” It is no weakness in or about woman, that utters so loud a protest against the ruder, rougher life that political enfranchisement must impose, but it is that glory which belongs exclusively to her, and has in it that delicate and divine halo which radiates no man's brow.

Man needs the ballot, and then he is weak enough, but God has clothed woman with a power that can never be equalled, and never magnified by that masculine distinction. She may touch the pulses of society, and determine the destiny of the nation as no other. For this she never has had, and does not need the ballot to-day. God in that wisdom too often forgotten in the agitation of this question, has arranged for the protection of woman, of her virtue, of her delicacy, of

her refinement and beauty, in the sacred guardianship of man; no matter that he is sometimes disloyal to the trust, or that she sometimes scorns the overture by her vaunted independence; still it is true that the head of the woman is the man, and in all civilized nations the manly sentiment finds its expression in highest respect for, and a readiness to guard the privileges and honor of woman, even to venture and peril. "Man looks up to woman with the homage that chivalry renders to the delicate, the beautiful, the spiritual, the true."

But if woman goes on—

"aspiring to vote,
And to row with her brothers all in the same boat,"

how is this high sentiment of respect, this beautiful and becoming guardianship to be maintained? I do not believe that women are so delicate that they must be kept under a glass case, but I do believe that political strife and temptation, that political office and rule, are so foreign to the holy and womanly instincts, with which God has endowed the female sex, that she cannot be caught up in this whirlpool without blasting the glory of her matchless being. Woman was no more made for the rage and acrimony of party strife, than she was made to sing bass, or to command an army. There is that in it which would pervert if not entirely extinguish the gentleness, and tenderness, and divine purity of both womanhood and motherhood. It would be like planting a delicate and beautiful flower in a soil and climate wholly unadapted to it; if it grew at all, the flower would lack its tint and fragrance.

Woman as a politician, in a better sense than we are often justified in attaching to the word to-day, would be no longer a woman, and were she my mother, my sister, my wife, I should blush for her. When woman by this movement scorns the protection and the representation she has in man, then she takes his place, and must fight her own battles.

I have read of an editor, distinguished alike for his courtesy and for his hearty sympathy with all wise reform, who was besought by a champion of woman's voting to plead her cause. He responded with conscientious and cogent arguments, and refused, but she was not after conviction, nor truth, but after this editor for her purpose—namely, his pen and sympathy in behalf of female suffrage. Finally, after such boldness of persistency, I had almost said impertinence, as she was capable of, he said: "Madam, if you come to me again in this manner, I shall be compelled to answer you as if you were a *man*."

The striking significance of this thoughtful reply opened her eyes to the possible future of woman should she fall to the privilege of being spoken to like a man. What a marring of the beautiful in our social harmony it would be, if men were challenged by this new and unnatural position of woman, to address her as political contestants constantly address one another. I believe with an able and considerate author when he says: "Even if the ballot could raise woman politically, the nation cannot afford so to degrade its men by divesting them of the sentiments of delicacy, of

honor, of loyalty—in a word, of chivalry, and arraying the sexes in the contest of numbers. Woman cannot hope to act for herself in public life, and still receive the honorable consideration now accorded to the delicacy of her sex. She must choose between the two; and if she shall elect the latter, she will inevitably find that in what direction soever she forces herself outside the sphere of delicate and chivalrous regard into the contention of labor and of numbers, she is taking a step toward her own degradation. If she can brave the opprobrium, society cannot risk the consequences.”

The natural feeling of revolt against this entire movement, entertained by hosts of the most gifted, of the purest, and most useful women of our time—women who have not been content to skim the surface, but to go to the bottom of this problem—women who have been too strong in the great faculties of the womanly soul to be borne away by any mere bluster, or tirade, or pretense of the platform, but have thoughtfully traced the movement to its wide, inevitable, and revolutionary results—I say, this feeling, in such, is not without significance.

It is not ignorance but wisdom, not conjecture but fact, not confusion but order, not discord but the sublimest harmony—not blushing timidity but becoming modesty, not servitude but royal liberty, not a cringing submission to man, but the assertion of the noblest womanhood, that constitute the forces of this revolt of the better angels of woman's nature; and who seeks to override or wrest them from their seat of power, seeks

to drag woman from her throne, and to obliterate the high law God has written upon her soul. There is certainly good argument, as well as a wholesome lesson in these words of Dr. Holland: "I have always observed that the most truly lovable, humble, pure-hearted, God-fearing and humanity-loving women of my acquaintance, never say anything about these rights, and scorn those of their sex who do. I have never known a woman who was at once satisfied in her affections, and discontented with her woman's lot, and her woman's work. There is a weak place, or a wrong place, * * * * * in the character and nature of every woman who stands and howls upon the spot where her Creator placed her, and neglects her own true work and life, while claiming the right to do the work and live the life of man." I must regard this movement, however well meant, as a perversion, a peril to her noblest being, a monstrous mistake, against which the wisdom and truth of God as they are illustrated in the great faculties and equally great functions of woman, utter a protest that gets no such emphasis from any words man can utter, as from the masterly nature of woman herself.

It was a man who struck down the giant in the valley of Elah: it was a woman who broke the alabaster box of fragrant ointment on the Saviour, and washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. The ministry of each was fitting. The one was becoming a man, the other was like a woman as God made her. In her own sublime sphere as God and

her gifts define it, I bid woman, all hail! When pure, she is nearest the angel of all God's creatures; but, so long as I read that there is one glory of the man, and another glory of the woman, and that in the image of God male and female created He them, I must be allowed to say, that when woman goes after conventions in order to secure the ballot, when by ascent or descent she struggles after an illegitimate place and so strikes out God's most wise distinction, she is plucking away the very foundation-stones of that "great white throne" on which God has placed her, and should she succeed, she will fall, as a star falls from heaven, fading as it drops.

But one of the noblest and most needed reforms of the age makes an appeal in behalf of female suffrage, and this will require me to notice the general influence of the movement upon the morals of society.

It is maintained by men and women whose zeal in behalf of the best interests of the race challenge my admiration, and whose ability and virtues are worthy of profoundest respect, and widest emulation, that the one great remedy for the liberation of humanity, from the vices that have long since consumed the happiness, and blasted into hopeless night the man and womanhood of a host, is to place the ballot in the hands of woman. This view is maintained now with special reference to the great crime and curse of intemperance. At first sight, especially with those whose souls yearn for a suffering world, and the overthrow of this monster who has set his throne by so many hearthstones,

and keeps it washed with the tears of broken-hearted wives and mothers, there seems to be a force in the plea we are bound to respect; but much as every good man must long for the overthrow of drunkenness by the obliteration of its cause, and much as I hail the master-power, and see the mission of woman in this movement, I am by no means persuaded that success depends on giving woman the ballot. The entire theory, spirit, and very largely the aim of political policy, must undergo a radical change before this plea can take on even the show of probability. I am sure history proves, and I dare say some might furnish the testimony of experience to the fact, that the party spirit has never flamed in any with a hotter glow, than in woman. Would her advent to this kingdom, so manifestly unseemly to her being and purpose, calm the troubled waters, make politics more respectable politicians more manly, and vice less prevalent? If all good women voted, as all bad women certainly would, I can conceive that a temporary improvement would be the result, but as soon as that familiarity which breeds contempt would manifest itself, as soon as woman would become entangled in political strifes and ends, as that the appeal would be to her selfishness, to her pride, or as soon as she should fall a victim to the intrigue and influence of men, the moral force of her vote would perish, and the only result would be a larger vote on opposing sides, and the only alternatives victory or defeat. The worst monstrosities of the French revolution were produced by women, and no

wild frenzy in the ruin of the more recent demonstration of the commune, could match that which screamed in the voice and flashed in the torch, waved by the hand of woman. Let her be entangled in all the kindling excitements, and in all the varied interests of political life and purpose, and to say the least, if we may regard past experience as testimony of any force, the intensity of feeling, the pride, the cutting acrimony she will bring to politics on the one hand, will more than equal the calmness, and wisdom, and gentleness she can contribute to this troubled sea on the other hand. Then, in the respect of men, she will become commonplace compared with her present and exalted position, it will be the number of women who can be dragged from their homes to the polls, and not her unsullied character, her womanly instincts, that will come to be uppermost in the minds of men, and "when the spirit of chivalry with its generous loyalty to sex is gone, the glory of the Republic will be extinguished forever."

I cannot think of any one place where the respect entertained for, and the safe-guards thrown about woman would be so imperiled, as by her admission to political privilege and preferment.

To make the ballot in the hands of woman in the least beneficial to the morals of society, would require that all best and most sensible women would avail themselves of the privilege, and that they would always vote right, independent of the wishes of fathers, of husbands, of brothers, of friends, and of women who would aspire to office ; in other words the plea is, that

the ballot in the hands of women would only be exercised, and continue to be exercised, from motives and for purposes of righteousness.

That looks well as a vision held up before the imagination, but the new heavens and the new earth will displace the present order before the vision flushes into blessed reality.

The good women in this land are unequalled in their moral power to-day, and a destiny of unparalleled beauty awaits their advancing steps, if they are careful to avoid collision with those great laws and specific purposes by which God has distinguished and ennobled the sex.

For this endowment woman is not indebted to political privilege, nor does she need the vote to show its mastery. The memorable crusade of woman against intemperance a few years ago was free from political significance, and that was at least one secret of its power. That movement illustrated in a sublime way what moral force, what womanhood, what divinity there is in woman, when as woman, royal and queenly, she stretches out the sceptre of her God-given power. There was in it a self-denial, a sympathy, and a love, that challenged the admiration of the angels, secured the blessing of God, and before its moral sway hard and selfish men went down, and then rose up to a new and nobler manhood. Does not this movement, as well as others where women have ministered, teach that her moral power now without the ballot greater than man's with it, is not to be increased by giving her

the ballot, but on the other hand that a measure so revolutionary, and so contrary to her entire constitution, must diminish her beautiful mastery for good, by so much as it would magnify the appeal to the selfish in her, as it would enkindle in her the ambitious spirit of party, as it would put discord and blushful variance into the home, as it would rob woman of that sanctity and reverence which have always been a rebuke to evil on the one hand, and an inspiration to good on the other, and as it would furnish to the weak and ill-minded of her sex another opportunity to debase a womanhood they have already discrowned. Women, I hold, are strong because in all noble ministry they are untrammelled by selfish ambitions. It is idle to dream of preserving politics from selfish leadership and perversion in the hands of women any more than in the hands of men. As a woman, men who are engaged in the manufacture and traffic of rum fear her, and are bound to respect her, but when she becomes a citizen like unto men, they will treat her just as they treat men; and what with the rabble, and the ignorant, and the self-interested, on the female side, the majority will be with the enemy. I have the greatest hope in the combined moral force of woman in this great reform, and I believe that her prayers, her womanly influence, her touch of holy love and tear of pity, and the irresistible appeal of the noble being she is, are mightier than all the power of the foe, and it is for woman herself, not for the ballot, to magnify and employ these great forces until they shall come to be

to the evil-disposed as the rebuke of God, and to the fallen and the oppressed as the hands and help of angels; I plead therefore and pray that this beautiful and divine endowment of woman may never be exposed to the peril of political strife and rivalry.

I cannot believe that woman was any more made for such a purpose than a June rose was made to bloom in the Arctic regions, and I am certain that for all best ends she no more needs the ballot than the sun needs the additional beams of a lamp to increase his capacity for lighting the world. But I must stay. I have stated my views with emphasis, and I am ready to surrender them only when it is shown that the truth is on the other side. I have spoken, not in behalf of a party, still less in the interest of any rival feeling, but in behalf of woman. I say to young women and to all women who hear me, consider well before you break down barriers about you, which are not rooted so much in prejudice, in mere civil or social custom, as some would have you believe, as in the fixed laws of your being, and the fixed limitations of your mission; these, remember, are the testimony of the God who made you; and she who tramples upon it, tramples upon herself. With that thoughtfulness, and that careful apprehension and test of all the vital results that inhere in this problem, which it merits, the question is not a difficult one to settle.

If woman can better illustrate her noble faculties, and better fill her sublime mission, if she can better put purer blood into the body politic, if she can more

efficiently exalt the moral tone of the nation, and better purify the fountains of society, if she can preserve and better manifest the delicate tints that sit as a coronal of light on her queenly graces, if she can make her own home more peaceful, and better extend and maintain the sacred purpose of this Divine institutions; in short, if she can be more a woman, a nobler grander, and better woman, better filling the wide scope of her being as her Creator has so distinctly defined it, and as the noblest women of this age have so beautifully illustrated it—if all this can be better attained by giving woman the ballot, and thrusting her amid the competitions and strifes of men, then the ballot she must have, and then, as Grace Greenwood says: "That women are going to vote is just as inevitable as the falling of an avalanche from an Alpine slope." Yes, I believe with Miss Greenwood that the avalanche must fall, but in the achievement of the ends I have mentioned, there seems to be a protest against this unnatural movement louder than the thunders of the avalanche, and it is not to be overcome by the rash clamor of the fanatic on the one hand, nor by the best-meant plea and prayer of the more considerate on the other. Meanwhile remember that no unjust restriction is put upon woman; no being God has made, not excepting the angels that fold their wings before His throne, is endowed with such royal rights as she; let her rise to their dignity, and set out for the goal they have reared in the coming glory, and no moment of time need be lost, and no great faculty of her soul

need fall into decay from lack of opportunity, and as she advances she will carry suffering, needy humanity up with her, until it rests healed and peacefully on the bosom of God.

“The rights of woman! what are they?
The right to labor and to pray;
The right to comfort in distress;
The right, when others curse, to bless;
The right to love whom others scorn;
The right to comfort all who mourn;
The right to shed new joy on earth;
The right to feel the soul's high worth;
The right to lead the soul to God,
Along the path the Saviour trod;
Such, woman's rights! and God will bless,
And grant support, and give success.”



CHAPTER V.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

“ The mission of woman on earth ! to give birth
To the mercy of heaven descending on earth
The mission of woman ; permitted to bruise
The head of the serpent, and sweetly infuse,
Through the sorrow and sin of earth's register'd curse,
The blessing which mitigates all : born to nurse,
And to soothe, and to solace, to help and to heal
The sick world that leans on her.”

Thus far in these chapters frequent intimation has been given of the direction in which the mission of woman lies, but the purpose has not been so much to define, to illustrate, or to commend her noble privileges, as to give correct interpretation of her most admirable endowment for her work, to show by what great ordination of God she has been rescued from her ruin, and may be girded and crowned anew for her mission, and to offset those erratic and unseemly schemes which to many seem to be antagonistic alike to her noblest being, and her truest province. At the peril even of some repetition it will be well to concentrate your attention upon the one distinct and very important fact of woman's mission. That she is here for a mission as vast in its results as it is exalted in its character, those know best who are doing most to

serve her in harmony with the laws by which God has girded her being, and would control her life.

The history of the world is abundant in examples now thrilling, now romantic, now beautiful, and now rash, of what woman can do. But what she has often done, or what she can do, whether with ease, or by an unseemly strain upon her functions, may not always be taken as a becoming illustration of her mission. There is a singular variety in the positions women have filled, and in the exploits by which their names have been graven on the scroll of fame. The impression, or memory, these varied positions and exploits have left behind them, is not without an instructive significance, and in many instances very decidedly indicates the wisdom or the folly of the venture made or the work done.

You have all doubtless read with thrilling interest of the dashing achievements of Joan of Arc. Mounted upon a fiery charger, her wild shout rang clear and loud in the din of battle, and her flowing hair waved in the wind like a victor's banner. She was not without elements of excellence and graces that were worthy of nobler testimony than they secured in the rough of battle. Brilliant as was her career, she challenges my pity more than my admiration, when I remember that her wild mission was assumed, and not imposed. Her course offends every sense of propriety. This is the inevitable impression her history makes upon every considerate mind.

A woman may choose to be a warrior, but a warrior

cannot remain a woman. Joan of Arc lives on the lettered page of history, and in the glow of excited imagination, but not on the immortal tablet of human affection. How different the life and memory of Hannah More !

She found and filled her mission ; and when she was taken, she lived on grander and more beautiful than ever, as you have seen the horizon flush up with a sublimer glow after the sun has disappeared. Her life-work to-day is not a momentary flame that now and again flashes before us, and then disappears without any good result, but a steady glow, as if it were a lamp lighted by some touch of God, to help other pilgrims on the way.

I counsel my young friends to be sure to keep within the lines of that propriety which is law, and to have due regard for the memory and influence you are to leave behind.

The woman whose life, however humble, is the achievement of the womanly, the beautiful, the good, will live in the sweet fragrance of tender affection, and in the deathless glow of hallowed memory, when her name is forgotten whose daring adventure, or masculine plea, broke upon the noblest pulses of humanity with a shock. Even in the best mission, the work of the heart must outlive the temper of the passions and the toil of the brain.

It is one glory of woman's true mission that there is so much of heart in it. I am sure God appointed woman's mission with a view to the great heart that beats

within her. There is a great truth in the remark of Oliver Wendell Holmes, that "The brain-women never interest us like the heart-women; white roses please less than red."

But the road to woman's highest mission is not always easy, and many noble souls long for an ideal they never reach. Before giving to it any specific definition, I wish to direct your attention to some embarrassments in the way. Sometimes by her own, and sometimes by the fault of others, woman is hindered from achieving what would be to her a more congenial task, as well as a nobler aspiration. There is a plain distinction between woman's rights, so-called, and woman's mission. Woman's mission is the right of every woman, but woman's rights, as we sometimes hear, are directly the opposite of woman's highest mission.

The effort to enlarge the scope of woman's work and privilege by conferring upon her a civil distinction now only imposed upon men, has done its part to narrow and demean her mission. I refer to it now to give additional emphasis, if need be, to the arguments presented in the foregoing chapter. Just in so far as the minds of women are carried over to the side that demands the distinction of citizenship for women, as now exercised by men, there will be confusion as to what constitutes her mission, with a growing prejudice against that which is divinest. I have a feeling, not of disrespect, but of pity, when I see or hear a woman who is devoted to this object in behalf of her sex, for

I think it is a misfortune that gifts and graces that might adorn and render good service in a sphere far more worthy of them, should be wasted on a cause so unseemly and hopeless.

But another embarrassment in the way of women filling their highest mission, is that cruel necessity which often thrusts many a noble girl and woman into the rougher secularities of life in order that they may secure a livelihood. The woman that braves the wrestle of toil along with the opposite sex, that she may not rest like a burden on others, and that she may feel the thrill of a womanly independence, is to be commended. Still, I think it rather a hard fate than a good fortune, that so many young women of noble mind and heart must turn to employments not always suited to their peculiar constitution, and by no means congenial to their womanly instincts. How often in the factory and in the store and in the office her physical constitution is imperiled, her noblest womanly instincts are blunted, and sometimes her morals are menaced.

If you ask me, Was not woman made for these stations of drudgery, and for these trying perils of life? I unhesitatingly answer, No! I utter no word of censure against the toiling women of this land. My heart goes out to these weary thousands, many of whom fret under their uncongenial tasks, and all of whom are worthy of a better fate. They had better do anything that is honorable than beg; better wear and weary in toil not adapted to them than lounge and

dream away the time in vain display, sentimental reading, or frivolous pleasure, as do some whose circumstances save them from so hard a lot. But if there is some better thing for woman to do—something more womanly, something that would exact less from her physical, and more from her mental and moral constitution—that is the thing to be desired and sought after; and it is only wise that every young woman should take this fact into account in time, that she may adapt her training to a work that, while it serves her in the lower spheres, will not waste, but develop her in her higher faculties. I hold that the humble servant who is faithful at her daily work in a home where the mistress has a heart, is vastly better off, and is better fulfilling her mission, than the weary, sunken-eyed, and often sad-visaged girl of the factory, or the pale woman of the wearisome store. I own that these numerous openings to women are a mercy in the absence of something better, but they are a mercy as a crust is a mercy when a full and healthy meal is not to be had.

What I maintain is that the necessity which forces so many noble women out into the rough of the cold world's battle and toil, is a hindrance to woman's best and truest mission; and any word that can be said, or anything that can be done, that will in the least modify or change it, and set but one woman here and there on a better way, will not be lost. I wish I could inspire every young woman before whose steps life is throwing open its gates of reality, with the wisdom

and womanly resolve of fitting herself for such a place as will prove to her great being what the light is to the beautiful in nature, giving compass, and power, and glory, to her great endowment.

But it would only add to the cruelty of this necessity to state it without intimating some remedy, if remedy there be. It is true that Paradise is not yet fully restored: our social order is far from perfect; ignorance and poverty and selfishness, in high places and in low, are still dominant, and the weak and defenceless must suffer the most. Still, there is a gradual improvement going on; the tendency in all moral progress is to the elevation of the race, and there are ways by which the young women of our time may escape the hard lot of many of their sisters—a lot which, while honorable, is still more a drudgery than a pleasure.

If Christianity was universally accepted, if its divine law of love, of right and justice, had sway in all relations, and in all spheres, if the moral character of a vastly larger number of our young men was elevated so as to make a greater number of them worthy the affectionate embrace of hundreds of young women, who are now more than worthy of them, it is easy to see how the burden and waste of these conditions in many cases would be modified, and in others entirely removed, and suffering, toiling woman would be unspeakably advantaged.

But if a noble-minded girl must choose between a young man who is not worthy of her, and a place of

toil that is not congenial to her, she wisely chooses the latter evil as the lesser, though she cannot fill her high mission so well in it. There is no way in which any woman may more effectually help her sex, than in the encouragement and increase of love-lit and godly homes.

It is an iniquity that merits the severest rebuke, when by any plea or pretense of rights, the home and the marriage relation are slandered. Such offence is an impeachment of God's wisdom, a violence to the noblest instincts of woman; and she who is guilty of it blots out the sweetest joy and brightest glory of her sex.

There is probably not an unpervverted man or woman living, who is not ready to attribute the noblest thoughts, inspirations and rewards of life, to the holy love and bliss of the home. The increase of well-ordered homes, homes that are Christian in character and purpose, opens the brightest Paradise on earth to woman, and provides her a mission upon which God has set His seal of approval and blessing.

Do women know that when they deride, oppose or reject Christianity, the system which has given the home to the world and has set over against it the gate of heaven, they insult the best and mightiest friend woman ever had, and that in such opposition no being is made so much a sufferer as she? If women would help their sisters into a higher and more womanly mission, let them do what they can do, and what it eminently becomes them to do, to promote Christianity and the hallowed institutions that belong to it.

Another remedy for the bettering of the condition and the exaltation of the mission of woman, is proper education. Hundreds of young women must do what they can, not what they would like. Their lack of capacity is not their reproach, but their weakness, and often their commission to a life of drudgery. Many poor girls have not the advantages of culture, and many who have waste them.

The first are not to be blamed, and the second are certainly not to be commended. Young women who have any regard for what is before them cannot too highly appreciate every means by which every noble faculty may secure enlargement. The better a woman is educated—and I do not take into account any culture that excludes the moral—I say the better a woman is educated, the higher she may go up, the greater will be the number of congenial fields that will open to her; and while that womanhood she has attained will not allow her to scorn, but move her to help those who still must continue in the lower walks and rougher toils of life, she may fill a wider and nobler, because a more womanly mission.

There cannot be a greater mistake than indifference to the education of our daughters, especially by those who cannot afford, if they desired so worthless an aim, as to set their daughters up in society as its idols or its toys. I counsel all young women, not simply as a matter of personal improvement, but as an endowment for a mission that while serving others will ennoble your highest being as well, to make good use of every

means of culture. Acquire the largest possible amount of useful information, interblend it with the grace of God, and a mission will open to you that will challenge your womanly faculties, and your toil will be like that of angels—your highest pleasure.

A forcible word has just come to my notice which I trust will fasten upon you what I have said, as only the clasp of a noble woman's love can do it.

Miss Emily Faithful, the English philanthropist, who has recently made a tour of this country, in speaking of American women, says: "There is much to be done for them yet. I found everywhere a lack of available work for them. There are many, very many, respectable women who want work a little above drudgery and cannot get it.

Much has been done for women who have the requisite training and taste by procuring for them employment in decorative lines. The best efforts on behalf of women are in the direction of educational progress, for it is mental culture that must make women independent. Without disparagement of those who are promoting the cause of woman's suffrage, I must say that, in my opinion, their energies would be better directed toward helping women to independence by giving them employment."

Scoff it who may, one only need look about him to see that the most useful, the most ennobling, and the most congenial pursuits come to those, as a rule, who have the grace of God in their hearts, and the grace of culture in their minds.

If woman would do most to ennoble her kind, to exalt and adorn her sex, not only in her character, but in the selection and performance of her life-work; in other words if she would open the bright gates of woman's truest and grandest mission to her advancing steps, and help her to fill it in a manner worthy of it, and worthy of her, she can do it in no way so soon and so well as by giving her first of all the Gospel, the infinite grace of Jesus Christ, and then wherever it can be that mental developement and intellectual refinement, which at once may be woman's adornment and woman's power.

Let us turn now to some of those spheres in which woman while achieving most for herself, may also do much for others. Manifestly she has a wide and beneficent mission in *Society*. That there is vast need for improvement, I need not say, and that society is largely in the hands of woman, and can be molded to her touch, should be quite as plain. To help it or to hurt it, woman is a force in society which cannot be overlooked neither in the formation of her character, nor in the selection of her work.

That she is responsible for many of its follies, its wastes, and its miseries is undoubtedly true, and that she can do much to correct these evils, whose existence depend upon her person and her company, is just as true.

The tone of society is largely the index to the character of a people, and that level which a man or a woman seeks in the social kingdom is the test of their

own moral measurement. Here woman is the mistress, but only the royal mistress she may be, when she is not herself the foolish victim of that over which she presides.

Let her carry into society, not the parade of her wealth, not the advertisement of her beauty—true beauty needs no such offensive herald—not the splendor of her toilet nor the elegance of her wardrobe, not the spirit of her vanity, nor the superficial gew-gaws and tinsel of fashion, not the lust of pleasure and applause, nor the wasting canker of indolence and idleness; but let her bring to it the splendor of those graces that round into symmetrical character, the force of intelligence, the sweet breath and visage of purity, the smile of a happy heart, and the kindly ministry of ready hands; let her come as God's queen to adorn that she may attract and charm, to inspire that she may ennoble, and to please that she may save, and she will have found a mission worthy of her. And for all this she need neither be great nor rich.

It is an opinion quite too prevalent, which neither does credit to, nor is it a virtue in our civilization that wealth is essential to the highest dignity and worth of society. It would be more truthful to say that wealth is often the curse of our social order and life. It may be made a blessing to the community, a preserving salt in the social state, but only in the hands of such as can and do most for society by the good ministry of their moral excellencies.

Wealth, when it is the master, makes caste distinc-

tions that are selfish, and becomes the impulse to and the abettor of numerous wrongs.

When money is set up as a standard of admission and privilege in society, it becomes a peril to the community. Heber Newton, in his "Womanhood," says with force: "So long as our women are satisfied with a society whose attractions are ratable by money values, the lavishness of dresses, the luxuriance of adornments, the sumptuousness of the table; so long as they are weak enough to allow in their drawing-rooms coarse and vulgar wealth, dishonor gilded over with high-sounding names, impurity well-dressed and nicely-gloved, so long will it be impossible for church or state to exorcise the demon of fraud or the evil spirit of lust."

It is for woman very largely to say what the moral tone of society shall be, and here I am sure she has a mission that needs a larger help to-day, and anxiously awaits her coming. Young ladies, when you enter society, let it be with that majesty of womanhood, that is brave enough to despise a fashion that violates good taste, and pure enough to scorn a habit, whether in the field of amusements, in the circle of social custom, or at the luxurious banquet, that has upon it the stain of evil.

But woman has a mission as noble as it is tender in ministering to the wants and sorrows that everywhere afflict humanity. The history of woman's mission in society as a minister of mercy is delightful to contemplate, and should furnish to her sex an inspiration and

example that must give the blush to all those efforts that tend to blunt the finer sensibilities, by turning woman aside from ministries so becoming and so divine.

One cannot read without deep feeling, and the thrill of noble impulse of the hallowed influence noble-minded and true-hearted women have been able to exert for good, upon the lowly, the fallen, the distressed, and the great. It is like a master spell which to human nature in its worst and best condition, is as the gentle shower and sunbeam to the drooping flower. Dr. Deems, the pastor of Alice Cary, said at her funeral: "The people of my congregation who did not know her, ought to be glad that I did. How many traits of tenderness have come before you here, how many observations have I been able to make to you, because I had been with her? To-day I can only make my lament over her as you do, in the simplicity of affection." Her biographer, speaking of her obsequies, says: "One of the greatest scholars of his time, sitting there, shed a silent tear for the sister-woman who alone, unassisted, in life and death had honored human nature; while a few seats off wept aloud the women, poor and old, who had lived upon her tender bounty."

It was the response of the best elements, the divinest faculties in human nature, to the nobleness, to the pure love and holy sympathy of true womanhood, glowing where it only can, in its own appointed heaven. Pre-eminently does it belong to woman to respond to all

the weariness, misfortune, and woe of humanity, with that touch and word and help and love which are hers more than all. And while these great soothing forces belong to her nature, and have often been beautifully manifested in the rudest, yet she can never repay Christianity for quickening, renewing, and giving hallowed direction to the angel-spirit within her.

Among the sick, the sad, the disheartened, the lost, and the dying, whether they be men or women, there is no minister of mercy equal to a noble woman.

Kindly, ever tender, patient, and hopeful, the light of her eyes is as helpful to an invalid, or a struggling spirit, or a bereaved soul, as are the bright stars flinging their beams amid the rifts of the cloud to the storm-tossed mariner. As much as child-love belongs to a mother, does the great ministry of comfort belong to a woman. The influence of such women as Florence Nightingale, Miss Dix, Hannah More, Mary Lyon, and a host more, less distinguished, but not less worthy, ever has been and ever will be an inspiration to Christendom.

Some of you have seen the engraving which has for its subject Mrs. Elizabeth Fry reading to the criminals in Newgate prison. How benignant and holy she looks, as if she were an angel sent from heaven; how wretched and blasted, and yet how intent and touched those before whom her presence is the spell of purity, and the resistless charm of pity, and to whom with the face of Jesus in her own, and His compassion in her tone, she reads the word of life.

So she went up and down in Europe, a motherly, womanly woman, securing better legislation, and kindling a larger sympathy in behalf of those whom society had flung aside to wither and die in their ruin. Was it not like a woman? Noble beyond utterance; certainly far beyond the world's appreciation, and yet only true to a mission that is hers as it is not a man's, are those women, a royal army of mothers, wives, and sisters, who have so largely devoted themselves to the help of human need, to the relief of human misery, and to the comfort of human sorrow. Like Jesus, they are often in the garden by the brook, and for others' sake, they often lift the cup of woe to their own lips, while amid the world's darkest shadows they "have patiently, heroically moved till, angel-wise, they have risen upward towards that land where there is no more sorrow nor crying, where God Himself with His own hands doth wipe all tears from every eye."

"Oh! woman in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light-quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

And would you have gay, happy woman devote herself to such a mission? God has appointed her to it, and so put her in companionship with the angels, and she who fills it most resembles the ministering spirits sent forth from heaven on such an errand, and most shares their unspeakable joy and glory. There is no diviner faculty in human nature than the spirit of self-

denial. It was this that made Jesus a world's Saviour: it is this that makes woman like Him.

She never sees herself so much as when serving others, and but for a ministry that blends sympathy, pain, love, and patience all in one, as the colors are interblended in the bow, the name of mother would lose its charm, and the memory of woman its halo of holy light. The history of woman in the vast and ever-appealing mission of which I am speaking lights up like a bow of beauty, because there are drifting clouds on which it can bend its arch. And those who have found no time to join in the clamor for an unnatural and more masculine distinction and privilege, have only gratitude to utter and praise to speak for the high appointment and varied opportunity they have had, to exercise in others' behalf, that mercy which ever parts its benediction between the benefactor and the recipient. If woman, by the ministry of her heart, has and can as no other can, pity and help and soothe and heal the sore heart of humanity, she has also gotten her noblest enlargement by the service she has rendered.

“A child's kiss

Set on thy lips shall make thee glad:

A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich—

A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;

Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense

Of service which thou renderest.”

What a mission woman has among her own unfortunate and fallen sisters! Whose touch but hers, whose voice but a woman's can bring any hopeful response from those broken and blasted souls, which lie

like shattered drift, clinging to the rocks, to be battered by every wind and wave? Now and again a faint lingering beam of womanhood struggles up from amid the waste and conscious debasement that oppress them, but who so promptly as woman can catch that beam, and meeting it with the kindly light of her pity and love, make it to flame up in a regenerating fire?

Mr. Newton tells of a wretched girl who lay dying in a house of ill-fame across the street from a Christian mission in New York. The good missionary in search of the lost found her, but appealed to and prayed for her in vain. She seemed resolved to die as she had lived.

The shadows of that awful night were gathering fast, when she consented to see one of the good women on duty that day in the mission. A noble sister, a woman of culture and social position, braved the opprobrium of entering that house, and offering to this Magdalene the Gospel of Jesus. With the blended glow of kindness and affection, pity and piety, she approached the bedside of one who had on her brow the scar of the pit; she took her wasted hand into her own, and with her own tender palm brushed the troubled tresses from her pale brow. Into that face which defined in its lines the face of Jesus, the dying girl gazed in strange wonder, and at length in feeble whisper said: "Would you kiss me?" Now let the narrator tell what followed.

"Instantly, unhesitatingly, a pure kiss sealed upon the outcast's brow the merciful love of God; as though

an angel brought it straight from heaven; and beneath that sign of hope the hard heart melted; and in low, broken words, the sinner's confession was sobbingly sighed into the ear of the woman-angel, and through her purest mediation into the loving heart of God. When the death-hour came it seemed as though there were other angels hovering round to bear from the clutches of the evil spirit this saved soul."

Oh, woman! you need not sigh for a mission, and it ill-becomes you to fall out with your lot, or to beat at gates God has closed to you, because He would have you enter others brighter and wider, while there is an orphan or suffering child, whose pain you can ease and whose steps you can guide; while there is a fallen or suffering sister within your reach; while there is a blasted, or disheartened, or tired, or sick human being, man or woman, to whom your touch may be as the touch of God, and your voice as an angel's word. You have a mission as holy as it is beautiful. The world has weariness and woe and sin and sorrow enough, to challenge your noblest gifts and graces, and you waste yourself by turning from their appeal to respond to that which has more of empty fame, but far less of enduring immortality.

What do you want with those "mysterious abstractions" which some call their *rights*? God, in your great heart-functions has appointed you to something infinitely better. Accept your Christ-like mission, be willing to be a companion with the Master in your life-work, and now as you toil and endure, in the sweet

response of good done, and after a while, when you stand to be crowned among the priests of God, you will have the approval and welcome of the King: "Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Leaving the wide and very exalted mission of woman in the home, for subsequent notice, I give my closing words to the most excellent and much-needed mission of woman in the church and kingdom of Christ. She has always been there, as she was last at the Cross, and first at the conquered tomb. But it is the thrilling and most blessed event of recent years that the mission of woman has been recognized and encouraged as it merits, and that she has been able to do a work for God and the race, that is to-day a master impulse in Christendom, and a prophecy that kindles anew the hope and challenges the gratitude of the Christian world. Great forces which, when girded of God, are master forces, forces that inhere in the constitution of woman, have responded at last to a lost world's piteous appeal, and they have come forth from their hiding-place, or from their waste in unworthy directions, and are showing to the world and to the angels what they are for, and what they can do when employed in the spirit of Him, and for His glory whose nature and life are the glory of true womanhood. And let it be remembered that the great work which woman has done in the kingdom of Christ, the work that astonishes and inspires, is the work she has done as a woman. She has had her becoming and distinct mission, and that,

save the irrepressible exceptions, she has kept it, and gloried in it, is one marked reason of her marvellous success.

Do you ask, "Shall not woman preach?" Yes, I reply, but as a *woman*, and not as a man. The man-like preaching of women has not proven a success. It never will. The fact that Jesus Christ sent out no women with the twelve or with the seventy, and the fact that the Apostles ordained no women, and that the Holy Spirit set apart and endowed no women to be pastors, teachers, or evangelists, cannot be set aside as a mere accommodation to the times, or the omission of what was not then a necessity. Great principles underlie these facts; they interweave with the great purposes of God; and who violates them, even for the best ends, manifests a zeal which is not according to knowledge. Still, woman has a grand mission in the Church, and the scope of it is more than sufficient to consume all her time, and exhaust her noblest energies. It is hers in ways becoming and numerous to carry the Gospel to the lost, and at all times to illustrate it in that meek and quiet spirit which is her best adornment, and in the sight of God of great price.

She is doing this to-day as never before, and to-day as never before the appeal of her own sex, many of them so inaccessible save to her own blessed mediation comes wafted upon the breezes of every sea. What a wail it is! How it should thrill the heart, and wake the pity and love of every noble woman into helpful prayer!

“ Listen, listen, Christian sisters,
Hear us, sadly, sadly moaning,
'Neath our load of sorrow groaning,
Writhing 'neath its bitter smart,
With no hope of rest above,
Knowing not a Father's love ;
You can help us, you can save.”

But there is another side to the sublime mission of woman in the kingdom of Christ, which is as thrilling as it is delightful to contemplate to-day. It is that devotion to the Cross which ever has been, and ever will be, as a Rock of Ages to sweep back every assault made upon it. Clouds gather in the sky; the citadel of truth is menaced here and assailed there; a wild cry rings out as of old for the release of the robber and the crucifixion of the Christ; but the glory of a new dawn gilds the horizon: woman's love embraces the Cross, and where is she not helping to raise it aloft to the dying gaze of a sinful world! It is a good omen, and we need not fear. The author of “Gesta Christi” beautifully and truthfully says: “And if, as often seems, a night of skepticism in America and Europe is to descend upon the most generous minds among the men, woman will still keep lighted the torch of faith, and guide the race till the morning shines again to all.” Woman, I am confident, will not soon forget what she was without, and what she is with Christianity. Well does she know that “in a society to which immortality is a dream, and Christ a myth,” she must soon be hurled from the throne of power, reverence, and dignity, heartily accorded to her, and that in all that dark ruin there would be no such sufferer as she.

No, men may scorn and give the buffet to the cheek of Christ, but woman will be true to her mission; and when the battle is hottest, and the peril seems greatest, woman will stand up for the Cross, as she once stood by it when all others had fled. To spread, to illustrate, to defend the faith of Christ is the lofty mission of woman.

She who promptly apprehends and joyfully accepts it, will link her name to Mary's, and the generations will call her blessed.

More women of this kind is what the world needs to-day—women who do not fret nor chide because by prejudice, injustice and evil custom, as some affirm, they have been straightened in their sphere, and deprived of their sacred rights, but women who see and hail their mission in the light of propriety, of law, and of truth, and who know that it is as high as heaven, and as wide as the world, and as sublime as the noblest purposes of God.

What cannot a woman do that is noble, beautiful, and immortal, with the endowment God has put upon her, and the mission that awaits her coming. Let her respond to the world's cry, with her touch, her voice, her kindly word, her winning love, her prayers, her patience, her vision of Jesus, and she will hasten the coming of the angels, and her own voice will blend in the peal of the final victory.

Oh, for women that are no longer content with the vanities of dress, of show, and of wasting pleasure, but are ready to bring all gifts and graces to the altar of

God, that they may be consecrated to Christly devotion, and the sun will be brighter, the air will be purer, mankind will be happier, and heaven nearer, where the soft tread, and the gentle voice of such are heard. Young women, that you may be good, and then great, aspire to such a mission, and pray God to help you fill it.

“Hence forward, rise to all
The sanctified devotion and full work,
To which thou art elect forever more.

“Rise
To thy peculiar and best altitudes
Of doing good and of enduring ill.

“If woe by thee
Had issue to the world, thou shalt go forth
An angel of the woe thou didst achieve.”



CHAPTER VI.

WOMANS' MISSION IN THE HOME.

“What most I prize in woman
Is her affections, not her intellect.
The intellect is finite ; but the affections
Are infinite and cannot be exhausted.
* * * * *
“The world of the affections is thy world ;
Not that of man’s ambition. In that stillness,
Which most becomes a woman, calm and holy,
Thou sittest by the fireside of the heart,
Feeding its flames.” *Longfellow.*

PERHAPS no subject sustaining any relation to the general topic in hand furnishes such an interblending of the vital with the worthless, of the excellent with the infamous, and of the delightful with the sad, as the one now challenging our thought.

Such are the possibilities of the home for good or evil, that the consideration of home-life with any high end in view is alike serious and important. When we speak upon this subject, especially with the relation into which we have put it, we speak for the coming generations, for the future of the Church and State, and we may well be anxious that our words be true, and spoken with an emphasis worthy of their mission. If good homes are a blessing to the world, bad ones cannot fail to be a curse, and any human being who gives a purer, nobler, happier tone to the homes of mankind has pronounced a beatitude on the race.

Unquestionably the most influential power in the home is woman. Home is her kingdom, and she holds its throne and gives dignity to the title of queen in it, by divine right.

Already some hint of woman's possibilities in the home has been given, but the subject involves too much, especially for you to whom the responsibilities of this sacred institution are soon to come, to dismiss it with so brief a notice. The character and consequences of home-life, not only on the family, but on the nation, the Church, and the world, are such as to give a preference to this theme which may not be lightly esteemed with safety.

It may be safely affirmed, I think, that excellent homes are on the increase, but what if it may be said with equal truth that degenerate homes are not on the decrease. It is an evil, painfully manifest, in every community, that the true character and purpose of the home are not appreciated, nor even understood as they deserve to be.

It takes more than a house, more than furniture, elegant or plain, more than axminster, tapestry, paintings, and plate, more than the scanty furnishings of the poor or the luxurious abundance of the rich to make a home.

To home belong the best elements of our nature, the noblest faculties of the soul; these touched and tinged by God make its foundations like unto jasper, and its walls radiant as if set with amethyst and sapphire.

“We need no power nor splendor,
Wide halls or lordly dome :
The good, the true, the tender,—
These form the wealth of home.”

But to how many the highest conception of home is a comfortable, convenient place, to find ease and pass the time pleasantly. As to a high and holy mission in it—many women have not yet risen to the dignity of such a thought, and the home is made an occasion for the waste of indulgency and indolence, or else becomes the scene of painful endurance or an unnatural confusion. No sadder, no louder wail ascends to the peaceful heavens to-day, than that which goes jarring up like a requiem of despair, from many homes that might be called as many hells.

To put purity, and love, and kindness, and joy into these is part of the noble wrestle of all the true and good, but especially of woman, and those are doing most for such a reformation, who best know that it requires more than legislation and the ballot in woman's hands, to regenerate and regulate the homes of the people. Woman is by no means responsible for all the wretchedness, crime, and ruin that nestle like an unclean serpent, in thousands of homes—in high places and in low—but she is clothed with such a mastery by the hearth-stone, that whether we consider the good of homes, or her distinctive mission as a woman, we cannot disregard her functions where God has so manifestly enthroned her. In the home woman's power, if she is competent to wield the sceptre put into her hand there, is almost unlimited.

To slight such a distinction on the one hand, or to scorn it on the other, is a tremendous peril always, and sometimes a crime. It is a wrong against which all truest enlightenment and noblest sense must revolt, that some in seeking the enlargement of woman's privilege, have indirectly, and otherwise spoken disparagingly of woman's relation to and work in the home.

If the roots of human progress in all that is best in our civilization could be traced to their true source, it would be found that they strike deep by the hearth-stone, and that the spirit, and work, and influence of woman more than anything else have nourished the life which blesses the world to-day.

There could not well be any other issue when we remember, that despite the profane flings of those who are wise above what is written, God has put the family and the home down as the solid and true basis of society, and it is His purpose that out of this institution first and most shall that civilization blossom as a tree of life, which is to be to this world as the overshadowing of His wings.

It is a profanation to strike at the institution of the home and family because many fail to appreciate their high purpose, and drag them down into the waste and woe of abuse.

Every reform that seeks advancement by railing at the home as a proper sphere for woman, and proposes to correct all the abuses of home life and all other life, by conferring upon her an endowment purposely meant to alienate her from the domestic realm, is an assault

upon her own best nature, and upon God's law in it, and is subversive of the best interests of society.

There is no plea any woman can make that can justify such a course. The effort of every noble-minded man and woman will not be to diminish, but to improve, to elevate, and to redeem the homes of the land.

I could not pray that there might be one home less in the land, but who should not pray that hundreds and thousands of them might be far better than they are. If many are bad, and suffer in their homes, if many are only victims of misfortunes there, would they not be worse and suffer more without their homes?

At least, to claim, as some have, that woman's condition is to be improved by diminishing instead of increasing the number of homes, or by giving to her a mastery, both out of the home and in it, which she does not now have, seems to me an attempt to be wiser than God, and to violate a relationship that has upon it His unmistakable seal.

No matter what rash criticisms are made in woman's challenge for the ballot, it is a positive revelation of God, a principle and law on which He proposes to rear both church and state, that the solitary shall be set in families, and that the home shall constitute a vital part of and go along with human progress, so that in all time, home and home-life shall be a dominant characteristic of and a source of untold blessing to the human race.

The problem of a defective social order in which the domestic is so much involved, is to be deplored; but it

is not without its compensations, and we are to grapple with it; God has not left us without numerous agencies by which we may correct and diminish these evils, but we are not to do it by striking at an institution which God has appointed, but which the evil-disposed take advantage of and abuse.

There are hosts of miserable mothers and children in this land, and over many a wife, mother or daughter borne from the house to the grave, one could take up Hood's dirge over the outcast, and consistently say:

"Oh! it was pitiful:
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none."

It is easy for a man or woman to say, "These women had better never have been married, and these children had better never have been born. Let us give the ballot to woman, and so clothe the sex with an independence that shall better regulate this relationship." Would it not be more womanly to say, far more in harmony with the principles of sound reason and of God's truth to say, "Let us help these women to a nobler and purer womanhood. Let us let a sweeter light in on these children, and the world round let us seek to multiply homes that will prove to woman a heaven and to the world a benediction." However miserable the hovels of the poor, of the ignorant, and of the vicious, still they are homes to the inmates, and in all their waste and woe, now and again beautiful touches of mother love and filial affection struggle up through the ruin, and shed a holy light upon the scene, as the setting

sun sometimes has touched the place of desolation with a strange glory.

What a ministry, to help such a home up until the darkness and woe give place to the glow and beauty of a blessed transfiguration. It is easy under an impulse ostensibly benevolent, but really selfish, to say such homes had better never have been; but it is far nobler to set about in God's name to redeem them. It is God's purpose, happily illustrated, we are glad to believe, in multitudes of homes, that there shall be no place on earth equal to the household for the exercise and development of the noblest and most masterly faculties of the human soul.

The woman who helps, not by limitation or extinction, but by the spirit and gospel of Christ, to correct the evils, and to give better character and scope to the graces and delights of the home, will do most to develop in herself the supremest excellencies of true womanhood. It is very true that the worst ruins of the race lie on the wreck of homes, but it is just as true, that in that most sacred of all earthly sanctuaries, the best hope of the race is enshrined. It is the greatness of the possibilities of the home that makes its abuse and ruin so dreadful. Home is the very core of society; here are to be found the germs that blossom into a blessing, or burst into a curse for the community. The entire fabric of civilization, its noblest progress and brightest destiny, are so largely dependent on the institution of the home, that she who thinks herself of little consequence in it, and far better out of it, has

only looked on the surface, and has formed a judgment which reflects on no one so much as upon herself.

It may be that some women are of little consequence in the home; but you may set it down as a significant fact that she who is of little worth there, is of like worth elsewhere. At least, it is God's ordination that woman is to be both mistress and queen in the home, and the women who apprehend and appreciate the distinction, rule the world to-day as no other human beings on earth do.

Oh, that all women, all daughters, all wives, all mothers comprehended and esteemed their vast mission in the home, how soon they might fill the sky with the angels of God, and the weary world with His peace and praise. Young ladies, some of you have established homes of your own, and others of you will. Suffer it not be done as a necessity, accept the home not as a convenience, but take it, build it and adorn it as a gift of God, a holy trust. The institution of the home is sacred, and no altar on earth may be within such near reach of God's own heart as the hearth-stone.

Let me remind you that you will reflect yourselves there as nowhere else, and the shining will either consume like a fire, or illumine like a star. The most beautiful scene on earth is a well-ordered Christian family. The Holy Ghost finds in that scene the most fitting symbol of heaven, and of the Church of Christ; and for the saints above and below, He can find no better name than "The Family of God."

With this much for general remark, I now invite your attention to the more distinct mission of woman in the home, under the separate relationship of daughter, wife and mother. Each of these has her place in molding the character, and in giving direction to the life of the home. The daughters in the home, and by these I mean those who are no longer children, may be the pride of it to their parents, and its charm to others. But they may be, and doubtless often are quite else than this, making their whole bearing as much out of place, and as withering to home joy and comfort, as the breath of a plague would be to the flush of health.

I trust that none of you to whom I speak may ever be included in such an indictment; still it will be well to anticipate an evil not uncommon, with a word of warning that may shield you from peril.

Let me caution the daughters in our homes to beware of *selfishness*. It is an evil for which heaven has no place, and earth will never be like heaven until it is driven to the pit whence it came. And yet it has no temple in which, like a serpent, it coils, and from which it springs with such frequency and with such power, as the human heart. What a waste of womanhood there is in it, and what fatal sharpness there is often in the arrow with which, in her hand, it strikes another. In a home is the last place such an evil should be allowed to live, and there is much here not only to reproach but to master it. What with the presence of parents, brothers, and others, how much challenge there is in the

home for the exercise and enlargement of that kindness and self-denial, which, while ennobling a daughter, are sure to make her a minister of good to others. No daughter can be true to herself, nor well-behaved toward others, who is purposely and constantly reluctant to surrender her preferences, or even her best-loved purposes, when the well-being and happiness of others about her demand the sacrifice. The cross never lights up into a brighter crown than when it is carried through a home.

An unselfish daughter in the home, puts herself into the happiest relation with all the other members of the family; and in proportion as she maintains this bearing, she brings the household to her feet. It is not for one distinct act, but it is that sweet, considerate, self-spending air of kindness and service, that without vanity assumes the guardianship of the place, as if the happiness of young and old was entrusted to her. Unconsciously she comes to the dignity of authority, and from every appreciative soul she secures the tribute of respect.

What a vision of beauty such a daughter is! And the vision is real, for such noble souls there are, and in homes blest it may be with little of earth, but with much of heaven, there are daughters in whom the poet's thought is realized:

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

You may choose to have your own way, and as a rule to gratify your own desires; but I may say, you

could not adopt a better method to quench the noblest fires God has lighted in your soul, and to gather about you now and in the after-time the shadows that will not only darken, but also imperil your way. The law of God is that you shall give as you have received, but not that you shall be more concerned about the exact measurement, than anxious to avail yourself of the noble privilege. Benevolence that is careful that there shall not be an ounce too much, nor a moment too many, in the performance of its ministry, is but the triumph of selfishness. In the home, such a display is the unsightly caricature of benevolence. Selfishness may win—it often does; but the gain is loss, for as the poet asks with striking significance:

“When you’ve sunk mankind
To be your harp-strings, who will share with you
The harmony struck from them?”

The mastery over selfishness in the home, is as well the overthrow of other passions that are unworthy the place. Where kindness and love make the air balmy and fragrant, the flash of temper, not the sin only of daughters, nor yet an evil quite uncommon among them, is as much out of place in the home, as a tiger on the street. Beware of it, dear daughters, and your restrained example may teach older ones the unseemliness and wrong of such an indulgence. A daughter’s temper, which is only an assault of selfishness, may play sad havoc among the younger children, and to no noble parent can it ever be less than a regretful sting. You may have much that will grind upon your

patience, and your piety too ; but in that, rough as it may seem, you are to find the discipline out of which are to come the strength and polish of a nobler womanhood. Remember, my young friends, that what you are as daughters, you are likely to be in all subsequent relations.

Is it one of heated unrestrained temper Solomon describes when he says: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top than with a brawling woman in a wide house?"

Then, I should counsel him well to whom I would say, beware of the daughter who is selfish, unrestrained in temper, and benevolent only in the indifference with which she hands the home cares over to weary mother, that she may better serve herself. She does not possess the elements that will make a loving wife and a happy home. As a daughter and a sister, what cords of silk you may weave in the home—cords that will fasten fadeless joys to your parents' hearts and memories, and bind a brother's soul to principles of honor and purity.

But, perhaps, all that needs to be said to you, is included in nothing so much as in that one duty of becoming respect for your parents.

If you have not this, I need scarce ask what you have, for in this is the largest interpretation of your character. God has given command to honor father and mother; it must be a high, a comprehensive duty, on which depends so much of life's hope and so much of human worth. The disrespect of the child for the

parent, to whom in any event it owes so much, is a revolt as cruel as it is unnatural; and she who puts it down in the formation of her character is building a structure that will not fit well in any worthy mission of life, while its best display will only reproach the possessor.

To all right-minded parents there is a world of joy in the presence and respectful ministry of a pure, loving and reverential daughter.

Nor is this ideal—it is real in many homes; and if it is not already, I trust it will from now on be both an inspiration and an aspiration in your souls. Challenge the highest esteem and the heartiest love of the household, not alone by the fact of natural relationship, but by the beauty and worth of your character as a daughter, and yours will be a crown better than fashion can design or wealth can buy.

A different experience is that, my young friends, when the desire for filial obedience and respect rushes upon you as a painful memory, when the opportunity is gone. The home of your childhood is among the things of the past, and the graves of your parents now lie where the gate of quickened memory opens. No one, for some part of life—not even the father—so much shares the mothers' companionship as the daughters.

I can conceive it must be a memory, however tear-dimmed yet bright with the sheen of heaven, to stand by her grave and feel that that warm heart beat happier and lighter for my love, my devotion, and my willing sharing of its cares. But oh! what remorse like that

which on some lonely day comes like the breath of flame, to the soul that has started up from its selfish ingratitude, but whose bitter tears cannot benefit the dead. "What would I not give," said Charles Lamb, "to call my dear mother back to earth for a single day, to ask her pardon, upon my knees, for all those acts by which I grieved her gentle spirit."

Daughters, remember you cannot do that, but if true to your nobler selves, you may escape such painful self-crimination and regret, and secure an approval that will sing in memory in the far on days with an angel's voice. If you are young, full of life and glad as the birds, as you have a right to be, be brave and true, kindly and affectionate, obedient and respectful, as well; do not be guilty of sharing the shelter and blessings of a good home, without filling your daughter's mission in it, and all the bounding pulses and hopes of your being will secure noblest response, while you rise to the exalted standard of,—

"A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command;
And yet a spirit still and bright
With something of an angel light."

2. From woman's mission as a daughter in the home, let us now turn to her duties and privileges as a wife.

Very hallowed memories cluster about, and very solemn issues harbor in this relationship, and the man who does not appreciate such a gift of God as a noble wife, is not worthy the devotion of a woman. The simple word is not without a significance worthy your

thought. Ruskin pronounced the word "wife" one of the most beautiful and appropriate in the language. He describes it as the great word with which the English and Latin languages conquered the French and Greek.

Wife means "weaver." "You must be house-wives or house-moths, remember that. In the deeper sense, you must either weave men's fortunes and embroider them, or feed upon and bring them to decay."

The wife cannot do all that is required to be done in the home; nor upon her alone does the obligation of making a home pure and happy solely depend, but she has a distinct mission in it, and that mission comprehends the most and best of home character and life, for the reason that woman's endowment is princely there, and that is her truest and grandest kingdom. She is not to be a slave in her own house, nor is her home to be a prison; she is to catch up its sunshine, its harmony, its fragrance of purity, and sympathy, and peace, and go out into the weary world scattering them everywhere, as a May morning scatters its fresh light, its blossom-scented air, and the carols of the birds; still by a law of conditions the home is pre-eminently woman's world; she is to be a keeper at home, and as a wife she has most to do with the making of it. She may reverse the bad fortune of the husband, or counteract his evil habits, and still keep the glow of love and hope on the cloud; but if she, the enthroned one in the house, is the offender, how can the husband in any emergency take heart, and come back to plant flowers on the desolation of his home?

A woman's first mission as a wife in the home is to fill her place as such. That she may be wedded and not be a wife in any noble sense, clothes the wifely character and mission with great value. She who enters upon the marriage relation, is no longer to be the woman she was, except as the noble being every woman should be, now appears in the worthy wife she is called to be. She is to be a help-meet, made worthy not only by the being she is, but still more by the faithful and becoming ministry of her life as a wife, of that exalted esteem and reverence which every loyal husband accords to her. I say with emphasis that she is to be a wife, not a lady of ease, of indolence, of ornament—save as noble service makes her beautiful; she is not to be set up in stately, lazy mien, as a costly vase is placed on the mantel, or set by the hearth-stone. She is not to take on lordly airs, either of imperial authority, or extravagant display; she is neither to be a man nor an empress, but nobler than the one, and greater than the other, as a true-hearted and well-minded wife. Now, that she has secured a home, she is not to turn it into a soft couch for the wasteful repose of a luxurious life, nor to transform it into a trellis to show how much of superficial splendor can be hung on a withered heart and an empty head, and so challenge her husband to lavish on her his money, while she lavishes on him such an opportunity to spend it (I should better say in such a case to waste it) as he never had before, and will soon regret he has now. Oh, no! she is not to be such an one; but rather a

sensible and faithful wife. She is not to be a drudge; but a housekeeper and a home-maker, whose industry, love, patience, and constant devotion, weave themselves as a bright coronal about the manhood and life of the husband; and when all goes well, so endowed, she will be as a sun-beam on his path; and when all goes ill, she will bring the angel's touch, from which comfort comes to soothe and courage to help.

A good wife is more than any other to a man fulfilling her sublime mission by his side, and failing in it she may only be the plague of his life. A man whose manhood has not gone down in his ruin, will rise from any misfortune, if his wife has decision, economy, and grace. But who can beat back the sweep of indolence, extravagance, and folly in a home? Who comes from his care and toil to such a place, may enter a house, but not a home—will find a chill for his heart, a grief for his spirit, a disappointment, a discouragement for his life, but not the rest of love, nor the inspiration of helpful, invigorating companionship. What wonder, that in such a case he should find some more congenial resort, or sink into gloom and despair. Rich or poor, the wife has not less than a divine mission to make the home an abode of peace and cheerfulness. Every true home is such a place as every true husband would be loath to leave—his Eden bower, his most delightful rest, his holiest sanctuary; and while it is not always the wife's fault that the home is not such, it is no less her high mission to make it such where the embarrassments are not over-masterful.

It is a fearful reflection on many a wife, when a weary husband must enter a homeless house, and take to himself this thought of Byron:

“He entered his house—his home no more,
For without hearts there is no home, and felt
The solitude of passing his own door
Without a welcome.”

The moral influence of a good wife on her husband, for protection in the hour of temptation, for sweet comfort and high courage in the day of adversity, for prudent counsel when cool judgment and wise caution are required, for unearthly devotion when fever burns and the vital springs run low, and for holy mediation when the soul at last struggles for emancipation from sin, or is pluming its wings for flight to the Father's house—at such times, and for all noblest ends, the moral power of a true wife is simply incalculable. The greatest and best men owe most to those noblest of women, their loving, considerate, and princely wives.

Edmund Burke only repeated the royal tribute thousands of husbands with right pay to-day to the mission of woman as a wife when he said, “Every care vanishes the moment I enter under my own roof.” Luther, a man well-rounded in the grace of domestic affection, said: “I would not exchange my poverty with her for all the riches of Cræsus without her.” De Tocqueville, when the evening shadows began to fold about him, said: “Of all the blessings which God has given to me, the greatest of all, in my eyes, is to have lighted on Marie. You cannot imagine what she is in great trials.

Usually so gentle, she then becomes strong and energetic. She watches me without my knowing it; she softens, calms, and strengthens me in difficulties which disturb me, but leave her serene." At another time he says: "I cannot describe to you the happiness yielded in the long run by the habitual society of a woman in whose soul all that is good in your own is reflected naturally, and even improved. When I say or do a thing which seems to me to be perfectly right, I read immediately in Marie's countenance an expression of proud satisfaction which elevates me.

"And so, when my conscience reproaches me, her face instantly clouds over. Although I have great power over her mind, I see with pleasure that she awes me.

* * * * I could not go on with my task if it were not for the refreshing calm of Marie's companionship."
* * *

"In my perpetual irritability of body and mind, she is a providential resource that never fails me."

The distinguished M. Guizot owed his greatness most to his wife, and said in testimony of her wifely qualities: "Even in the midst of great undertakings, domestic affections form the basis of life; and the most brilliant career has only superficial and incomplete enjoyments, if a stranger to the happy ties of family and friendship."

Has woman a nobler, a mightier mission than as a wife? Not if her husband, and her own qualifications make it possible for her to fill it well.

Less exposed to the rough and whirl of the outer

world, less fretted by its ambitions, and less worn by its struggles, less mingled with its secularities, and less liable to its assaults than man, she still touches the keys of existence with a sublimer mastery, because, with a more womanly heart; and from the throne of her home-kingdom more than all, does she move and give direction to the best progress of the world, both in church and state. The institution of the home gets its best worth and greatest beauty from woman in wifely attire.

Dr. Hamelton quaintly says: "Six things are requisite to create a home. Integrity must be the architect, and tidiness the upholsterer. It must be warmed by affection, and lighted up with cheerfulness; and industry must be the ventilator, renewing the atmosphere, and bringing in fresh salubrity day by day; whilst over all as a protecting canopy and defending glory, nothing will suffice except the blessing of God." Whilst these should be the virtues and graces of every husband's character, we well know that the home is wanting where they are not the gems in the crown of the wife. Where such a wife comes, the home is made, and it is not likely that ruin in the fall of her husband, or the folly of her children, will ever be flung across the threshold by any neglect, waste, or defection of hers.

As Mr. Ruskin beautifully says: "The stars only may be over her head; the glow-worm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot; but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it

stretches far round her, better than houses ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermillion, shedding its quiet light far for those who else were homeless."

The woman who fills such a mission cannot live in vain, and he who finds such a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor from the Lord, while the world is better for the blessing he shares.

3^d Briefly, I must speak yet of woman's mission in the home as a *Mother*.

This high office of woman is worthy of better treatment than can be given to it in the limited space left to this chapter. I am quite sure the contemplation of no theme associated with the home could delight you more. There is a charm for all noble souls in the word, and he or she is not dominant in the highest faculties of man- or womanhood, or else has failed of one of heaven's best blessings, whose noblest impulses are not stirred, and whose holiest memories are not quickened at the mention of the endearing name of mother.

If we could gather into one great thought all the mastery of excellence, of beauty, of love, of patience, of self-denial, and of power that is embosomed in the nature and high prerogatives of the mother, and could we interpret the divine meaning of it all, and appreciate it as it merits, we would stand where the light of heaven would burn a better image on our faces, and no longer wonder that God has put a great sanctity and distinction upon motherhood; a sanctity which should ever be a withering rebuke to her who, by

criminal limitation, or any unnatural slight of her own offspring, flings contempt upon it. No other one can fill the mothers's mission to her own child, and if she be at all worthy, there is no one whose care the child needs so much, and with whom it should stay so long, as with her who by the price of pain knows it best and loves it most.

She who can care for a canary, or pet a dog, with a devotion far beyond its worth, but purposely consigns her child to the care of others, that she may be freer to indulge in the vanities and follies of society, or preserve a feeling of false dignity and mock modesty, which is a reproach to any woman, may be a lady of much dusty refinement, courted and flattered by the great, and the rich, but she is not a mother, graced with and giving beautiful exercise to that holy mother-love, which in a soul worthy of it never dies, and in the home is the sweetest light, and best anchor of those who share it.

There is a blessing in the mere vision of motherhood ministering to the dependent child, or yielding itself up in tender service to those who once nestled in its bosom, but now walk proudly in its light, that this hard, cold world cannot afford to lose; and any human being who reproaches it in any way, jars against the noblest sensibilities of humanity with violence and hurt, and sins against God. The woman whose selfish pride offers such an insult, has dishonored a distinction to which this world in all that is best and most beautiful, owes more than to any other one thing.

In all the world there is no such combination of moral excellence, no such illustration of all those faculties which are greatest in the human soul, and most effective in the best progress of the ages, as is presented in the noble heart and self-sacrificing life of a good mother.

Shut up in the home, and betimes weary with cares, that are often wrongly magnified, the mother perhaps feels that her lot is hard, and sighs at times for an opportunity to share in the rivalry of the world's ambitions, or indulge once more in the flow of its pleasures. I would speak for the comfort of all such who are worthy. It is not a change of place so much, as a higher appreciation of your mission that will increase your power and happiness. Are you filling your mission as a mother?

Then, I assure you, you are not trudging wearily along in the rear, unnoticed and unfelt, but leading the way among those noble spirits who are blessing the world, and are a spectacle to the angels. You are striking on chords whose notes are never to die, and providing music for the best march of mankind. In that son or daughter who is now yielding to your forming touch, and about whose character and life your anxious prayers are entwining the strong stay of God's blessing, a benediction is to descend on the race that will often touch and bless you here, and evermore burst out with new strains in your song in the eternities of God.

What a mission is hers?—where will you find any

match for it?—who in the symmetrical life of her child is writing a living poem, a psalm of God, and who is carving in the lineaments of man- or womanhood, an image of truth, and a testimony to righteousness, or who in the souls keyed by her own hand to the melody of the Gospel, is sending down through the generations a thrill of music the angels pause to catch up as they soar along, and by whose inspiration the weary here and there, are lifted out of the dust and set heavenward in their march.

Talk of a godly mother's mission in the home, and you have spread out before you the brightest, the fullest, and the best page of this world's history.

George Herbert said that one good mother was worth a hundred schoolmasters. In the home she is "loadstone to all hearts and loadstar to all eyes."

Emerson says that "a sufficient measure of civilization is the influence of good women."

"Posterity may be said to lie before us in the little child in the mother's lap." For the good and great in all places, we are indebted most to their first and most influential educators—their mothers.

That the good lives and grows in this world, and that it is going forward to a destiny that will bring the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, is owing more to the power and piety of mothers than to all other human instrumentality combined.

Oh, the mission of a true woman in the home as a mother! How she can presume to attempt it, or how

hope to accomplish it in such way as it merits, without the word and grace of God in her heart as her most essential and best qualification, can only be explained by an utter lack of appreciation of her most sacred duty and privilege. In no heart or hand is impiety so dreadful, or evil example and teaching so pernicious, as in a mother.

Oh mother, it is only with the scarred hand of Jesus you can lead your child where and as you ought. Without the renewing touch of His love whom Mary mothered, your own affection may prove your child's worst curse. But clothed with His beauty who knows a mother's cares best and loves her most, what a repetition of His form, and what a help-meet to His mission to this world you may be.

Thousands of blessed mothers are toiling, enduring and praying under the holy impulse of the Saviour's word and spirit to-day; and if we would know the power and beauty of their mission, we must wait until we can read it in the cloudless light: then and there we shall see and hear it amid the splendors, and in the ceaseless songs and joy, of the heavenly home. Next to being such a mother, is the unspeakable blessing of having, or having had such a one.

Many a wandering soul to-day, would be clean swept from its moorings, but for the one lone, strong cord of mother-love, yet sweet and warm in memory, that holds it in the beating storm, and will not allow it to be swallowed up in the flood, nor will it yield the appeal that has been put into it by a mother's prayers.

until that poor lost one is brought back and anchored to the cross of Jesus.

No man who is serving God and the race to-day, no matter by what trump of fame his name is rung, or by what titles, what gifts or great achievements he is distinguished, can outstrip her mission who more than any other made him what he is; and to him no legacy is so beautiful and valuable, as that her life and memory bequeaths to him:

“Happy he

With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall,
He shall not blind his soul with clay.”



CHAPTER VII.

USEFULNESS.

“ With inborn and unboastful majesty
Alike from careless levity, remote
And a behaviour schooled by selfish rules,
Alike removed from rashness and from fear,
With firm and fearless step she ever walked
The narrow path of duty—all unconscious
That she won worship where she never dreamed
Of approbation.”

Schiller.

“ Arise and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.” *1 Chron. xxii : 16.*

The noblest dignity of manhood or womanhood is to be useful in such manner as to blend the life and the will of God in completest harmony.

I shall hope, my young friends, to stimulate in you some high and becoming aim, and to assist you in such prosecution of it as will commend it on the one hand and ennoble you on the other.

I could not ask that you might be wealthy, or great after the world's estimate; but with best endowment of head and heart, and a needy and withal a beautiful world about you, I could pray with a desire that thrills to the heavens, that you might match the angels and be useful.

There is great unseemliness and great iniquity in uselessness. It blasts the gift and every high faculty

of life, and charges a terrible reproach upon God, and upon the privileged beings He has made us.

A bad woman shocks every right sensibility of true man- or womanhood, but I think it would be difficult to imagine a more pitiable sight than a woman who, from doing nothing worthy, or from mistaken choice of service, or obstinate perversion of place, is useless.

And what with vast numbers of aimless men and women, how many useless people there are. I might recount many evils of social life, temptations and snares of wealth, which, along with some false views of duty and refinement, characterize our time, and make their appeal to young women, and no doubt do much to increase the ill-bannered army of the useless. In this matter you are exposed to peril, and I am confident you will be advantaged by allowing the light of a kindly but earnest warning to fall on your path. If you have any desire to live in the true sense of the word, you can least afford to be useless.

The busy Master, who was God over all, and might have enthroned Himself in majestic repose, and chosen to delegate His mission to others, went about doing good, and found His greatness and joy in ministering, rather than in being ministered unto. His unwearied devotion was a withering rebuke to uselessness; He honored the useful in the fowls of the air, and in the lilies of the field, but in the barren tree He smote it with a curse. You will always find Him protesting against uselessness. He closed the bright gates of His kingdom in the face of virgins, who pre-

ferred indolence and sleep to duty, and the man who wrapped up his gifts in a napkin He sent away to the darkness. There are so many people in the world now that there is danger of indifference to individual responsibility and duty. You may suppose that one woman failing to contribute her part to the world's weal, will not be felt nor missed.

Over against so shallow a pretext set the great fact, that God has formed the best progress of mankind into a great harmony, and that He has given you a place in it, and will observe the missing note, while the jar of its absence will be felt throughout the sensible universe. If the number of people were increased ten-fold, by so much more would the obligation be imposed upon you to be useful.

It is lamentable to live only as a hindrance, a waste, a sluggish weight on fast-flying time. When a noble tree is caught up in the whirl of the tempest, and flung down to die, it leaves a blank, and is missed. Its green drapery was refreshing and beautiful, its shade was a benediction, and the symphony the breezes played amid its boughs was a delight. But who cares for the dead post that has been lifted out of its place and tossed away to rot?

So, with many a life that might have been as a cedar of Lebanon, or as a waving palm by the brook, but chose to be useless. Whether you are to be as beautiful trees of life, abundant in mercy and good fruits, or only as rootless, lifeless posts, or as a dead trellis about which the industry of other hands may

entwine their work, is a thought that may well challenge your most serious consideration.

The castle of indolence is never far off from young life. I come to close every one of its creaky, mouldering gates, and to warn you alike from dreamy listlessness and busy idleness. You were made for better companionship than those of whom it is said :

“ Their only labor is to kill the time,
And labor dire it is and weary woe.
They sit, they loll, turn o’er some idle rhyme,
Or saunter forth with tottering step and slow.”

Uselessness will appear to you the more unsightly and criminal, when you remember the endowment of gift, of privilege, and of opportunity God has so munificently lavished upon you.

We can excuse and tenderly commiserate the limited and aimless life of the imbecile or idiot, but the challenge is all the other way with those whose gifts are not only under the sway of right reason, but often of cultivated intellect. Everything in and about you is an appeal to usefulness. It is just here that this distinction which God has so pre-eminently conferred upon rational beings, rises to the dignity of sacred duty and solemn responsibility. Manifestly, vastly more than nature, so true to her trust, were we made to be useful.

Life is not a toy to be handled with the daintiness of affectation—not a bubble to float in the air, nor an insect to dance on the wave until some wind overtake it; it is not to be a low or dreamy indulgence, not a

plague that wastes. Life is a great gift—a single opportunity with possibilities vast enough to fill time and eternity with the beatitudes and joy of God. Gæthe said, to be useful, that is life. “Activity, responsibility, absorbing interest, that is life; nothing else is.”

It is the best possible employment of faculty and privilege, the noblest and largest result of every highest mission to which we are called; and who is guilty of so great a waste as the misuse and abuse of life, impeaches the wisdom and scorns the love of God, and flings contempt upon the dignity of the race.

There is a sort of creature, half plant and half animal, which fastens itself to the reef over which the waves drive, and does nothing “but grow and twine its feelers, floating in the tide, or floating itself upon its foot-stalk, when that tide has receded, for months and years together.” Now think what a calamity it would be, with the soul God has given you, the mind you may boast, the skill you may acquire, and the advantages you have, to be fastened to a bleak rock, able to do nothing but toss or fold lazily your arms, with no change save when the ocean’s swing would now desert, and now engulf you. But are there not many whose life is without any more variety or utility than chequers the life of the sea-anemone? Like the coming and going of the tide, the golden days float over many people, and leave them just where and what they were.

They have no higher end than the queer and useless polypus of the sea. “They go through certain mechanical routines of rising, and dressing, and visiting, and

dining, and going to sleep again; and are a little roused from their lethargy by the arrival of a friend, or the effort needed to write some note of ceremony. But as it curtsys in the waves, and vibrates its exploring arms, and gorges some dainty medusa, the sea-anemone goes through nearly the same round of pursuits and enjoyments," with many who boast intelligence, and upon whom God has set the sapphire glow of immortality. I trust, young ladies, you are quick to apprehend how ill-becoming a useless life must be to such beings as you are, and as ready to perceive that the very greatness of your faculties, along with the advantages you enjoy for their enlargement, can only tend to render uselessness the more complete and hurtful should you fall into its wasting snare. There is ample room and opportunity for the best and most diligent use of all your powers. It is idle to say that woman's highest mission is or can be restricted except by her own choice. If you will turn your eye to that noble company of women, whom to emulate will do you honor, and some of whom now sit among you, you will observe in their distinguished sway in all high and becoming relations, the gates of numerous kingdoms open to you, and commanding the best faculties and products of mind, the best emotions and affections of the heart, and the best skill of the hands.

Nothing but your own indifference or mis-direction can hinder you from filling every day with usefulness, as a May morning fills the air with the redolence of blossoms. It is a misrepresentation, when in putting

such limitation to woman's mission as would guard it from abuse, we are charged with narrowing her kingdom, and embarrassing her way in it.

I say, that the wide world-vineyard is open to you, and it has more by-paths and highways on which you can leave the foot-prints of a useful life, than will exhaust all your energies, tax every gift to its utmost, and consume all the years of the longest life.

Do not chime nor chide with those who, discontent with their mission, prefer to brave the edge of a precipice, to walking on the well-defined path stretching before them; but set about at once, where you are, and with what qualification you have, to be useful, and then you will not fail when you reach the point to which you now aspire.

Your fitness for and success in a larger realm depend not nearly so much upon your dissatisfaction with your present position, nor upon any excited clamor to get out of it; still less upon any feeling of contempt you may entertain for it; not upon these, so much as upon your cheerful success in the humble or graceful place you now occupy.

The woman who is called to a broader and higher sphere, is the woman who can ill be spared from the one she now fills, because so useful in it. Nothing but such a life alert for usefulness, and faithful in it, will crown you with the true dignity, and entitle you to promotion in the ever-widening functions of true womanhood, and at the same time rescue you from the aimless, visionary life of those who sometimes with

pretense of piety, and sometimes without, think the highest dignity of existence to consist in their right to

“ Sit and sing themselves away
To everlasting bliss.”

But usefulness is not exclusively a characteristic of human life, nor an inevitable consequence of any endowment of faculty and privilege we may enjoy. Many people exist who, instead of being useful, are a plague to society, and some of these have the additional dower of gifts which are only demeaned by those who esteem them lightly. It is not nearly so much the peculiar qualifications we possess, or any open door in our way, that makes us useful, as what we are. So, in any noble work, our doing will be in proportion to our being.

The compass of womanhood is the measure of usefulness. The daisy that comes smiling up amid the spears of grass does far more than the waxen beauty protected beneath its glassy dome, because it is more. The seemingly helpless babe that smiles or prattles on the mother's knee, or sleeps in sweet innocence on her bosom, does infinitely more than the most elaborate statue, because it is more. What I mean to say is, that there must be a corresponding basis for all usefulness that has any high moral end in view, and that is competent to crown life and destiny with that immortality in which all human life should and may culminate. Proper usefulness is a thing first and most of character; not of advantage, still less of chance.

We cannot resolve to be useful, and be so on that

account, though such determination is wise and necessary. Resolution is a very rugged tree, and its roots, if it be worth anything, must drive down deep into the rich soil of a noble character. A flower that would be bright in tint, and fresh and sweet in its fragrance, or a tree that would be rich in its foliage and abundant in its fruit, cannot grow on the rough cheek of the rock, or in the sterile waste of the desert; but out of good soil it must shoot with a vigor and beauty that challenge the best culture of nature.

Usefulness is not a product of mere muscle, nor of brain tissue, but it is the result of the best faculties of a human being wisely employed, and properly consecrated. It is the beautiful flowering and bloom of a soul charged with those high moral forces and purposes which are deep-rooted in truth, and kept bright and strong by the baptism of God's spirit and grace. When Mary brought her fragrant tribute to the Master, and when Dorcas wrought for others in His name, there was no response to pride, surely none to selfishness, but there was the sublime testimony to a noble life, infinite in its usefulness by reason of the character and direction of its consecration. Jesus Christ worked from the centre out, so does spring when it puts down its carpet of green, and garnishes hill and dale with flowers of fragrant beauty. Remember that the roots of womanhood strike deep in the soil of the moral being, and any service that does not find its impulse there, can only end in cumbrous or gorgeous artificialism.

You may be useful not because others are useful, not because you are enchanted with any glare of reward, but because you have attained to a nobility of being, and have given such high and worthy consecration to every faculty, to every acquisition, and to every opportunity, that no other response but that of noblest beneficence to humanity can satisfy the aspirations, or chime in with the music of your soul.

Remember, my young friends, that mere external flourish and parade, though beauty, refinement and culture all mingle with them, are not the correct standard of usefulness.

A flower may grow on a dung-hill, and the hand of a thief or an assassin may be jewelled on every finger. A cultivated mind may render you noble service, but most of all you need a rich heart to make you useful.

With character as a source of motive, and an appeal for such benediction as God only can bestow, you will need great wisdom in the selection of your life-aim. It is a great lament and source of evil, that there is so much waste in human life—I do not mean now from indolence, but from misdirection. Set it down at the beginning that life is too short, and that the forces which God has given us to work out our destiny are too valuable, to allow them to be spent on a purpose, however worthy in itself, to which we have never been appointed.

The world is wide ; there are diversities of gifts, and there is a fitness of things. God has made everything beautiful in His time. The sun has glory, the moun-

tain majesty, and the surging sea power, because they remain what they are, and fulfill their high mission. I do not limit woman's mission, nor embarrass her noblest aspirations when I affirm, that along with men and angels, there are some great spheres to which she has never been appointed; and however you may be tempted or flattered by them, you can never be successful in them.

Some men are toiling hard, and only doomed to failure, because they have undertaken some other one's task. That this is true of not a few women, I have already ventured to say with sufficient emphasis. The mirage may be full of promise and beauty, but it is a great waste of time and strength to attempt to overtake it. The aim in life you have chosen may be more real in itself than the delusive scene that suggests my figure, but if it lie outside of your life-kingdom, it is an equal folly for you to attempt the mastery of it.

To be what we were meant to be, and to do what we have been appointed and fitted to do, is the highest reach of usefulness. That noble purpose is more than worthy of the best you can become in moral or intellectual endowment. In the full round sum of it, God has clearly marked it out, but in its details, it is a problem you are to work out by the discipline and disposition of the faculties God has given to you. We are to work by a law of proportion and adaptation; and as you advance in moral and mental progress, and pass through the various stages of life, your own necessity, inclination and fitness, will determine what noble work

in the ever-widening mission of woman is appointed to you. It is pitiable to see any one, nobly or scantily endowed, failing to achieve in a sphere that positively refuses to make any response to them, not so much because of unfitness in every way, as because it offers no place on which they can stand. It has been assigned to others. We cannot live at random; we must have an aim; but if we have missed our aim, are we not doing worse than living at random?—for without a true and appointed mission, we should fall on a proper work sometimes by mere chance; but if we have combined our energies along with our prejudices to achieve that which is beyond our reach, how hopeless must our struggle be!

Such misdirection is not worthy in a man, I believe it is less so in a woman, by so much as she has advantage in the high moral faculties of the soul, and needs not in the wide domain assigned her to break over into forbidden fields. The scope of life for you, my young friends, is wide, and an ample variety of opportunity and ministry tempt and are worthy your noblest gifts and highest purposes, while the horizon all round reddens with the glow of victorious conquest. Find your mission, and fill it, and the reward of your usefulness will kindle in the imperishable glow of your immortality.

With character, and an appropriate aim, you need yet purpose and energy to make you useful. Even goodness must fail where there is no will. We cannot dream ourselves into a course of useful endeavor, nor will the opportunity wait until some strong arm

bears us to its threshold. You know how the youth, with the bright sheen of unfaltering zeal burning on his brow, scaled the rocky summit, and in his mastery and joy stood proudly on its crest, and shouted "Excelsior!" They only are useful in this world who determine to be so, who make it so fixed a purpose of the soul as to make success sure and triumph bright.

It is as becoming in a woman as in a man, and often quite as necessary, to attain to a noble independence. It will far better, and far more beautifully, develop the excellencies of your character to determine to take care of yourself, if need be, than to live in easy or anxious expectancy of the guardianship of some other one. I dare say, you will not fail of the latter; and I am sure you will be best worthy of such a benefaction, when you can illustrate in yourself the endowment that would have made you useful without it. A dreamy, sentimental, frivolous life, thrilled with no high aspiration, and mounting on and up to no radiant goal—a life whose best energies are all wasted on the tinsel parade and indulgence of personal vanity, or hushed under the shallow pretense and imbecility of a dwarfed soul, and not allowed to beat bravely in behalf of some noble end, is a slander on the possibilities of a human being; it does not belong to, but blushes on the royalty of your sex, and merits most your withering scorn. The best gifts, the grandest opportunities, are often squandered, and the vast and glittering prize of a human life is often forfeited, through lack of purpose and energy.

Such a life is like a morning, dull and heavy, dripping and dark, with no shout of the birds in the trees, no sun-beam on the lawn, and no aroma of flowers in the air. Call it breathing if you like, but that is not life. Oh, you have need to be, and you will only be what you may be, when you are as earnest as the stars, and as fresh as the flowers, clean washed with the dew of heaven.

There will be temptations and snares enough to entice you from those paths that lead to noblest destiny, and I cannot tell you how much you will be advantaged by that inspiring thrill of high and holy resolve, which is not more an element of success than it is a royal distinction of a womanly soul.

Remember that useful toil, whether of head, of heart, of hand, or of all in one, like the notes of a grand harmony, is not a misfortune, still less a disgrace. It is an ordination of God, and He who brought wind and wave submissive to His feet, and woke the still pulse of the dead, knew its weariness, and honored its mission. Somehow, and somewhere, the useful people in this world all work.

No matter what lot awaits you, whether it be yours to be confronted with the ease that wealth invites, or to share in the more common and often more pleasing necessities of life, remember, that there can be no noble womanhood, no life commensurate with the reach of faculty and privilege you enjoy, apart from usefulness. It is not so much what the circumstances around you may impose, or relieve you from doing

you are to think about, as the need all about you, as the high and abundant privilege of service, and the proper exercise of that splendid endowment for usefulness, for which you must answer at the bar of your own conscience and of God. It is bad, it is a shame, when any woman allows her circumstances to hang the drapery of elegance, and the pomp of wealth over an indolent and useless life. A jewel in a swine's snout is not more out of place than such a combination. She only is true to her better self, she only can be great who qualifies herself, and then throws every force of her being into the achievement of some noble end in life. The titled and the great may pass her by, but the angels will keep her company, and her eternity instead of being a barren waste, will be as a garden of God. She who has a purpose, not to be swept about by shallow opinion, nor blushed by fanciful custom, but in the calm majesty of a holy impulse and purpose, maintains an independence that regards the contempt of the indolent and the sneer of the proud as little as the noble ship does the ripples over which it rides, and undauntedly pursues her right and noble way, will triumph over all embarrassments, and humanity at its best will do her reverence, and say:

“Honor to her, who, self-complete and brave,
In strength, can carve her pathway to the grave,
And heeding not what others think or say,
Make her own heart her world upon the way.”

With this much now, as elemental and essential to the attainment of usefulness, let me direct your attention to some of its personal advantages and rewards.

Usefulness has in it a large function of discipline. It is remarkable how God has arranged that useful ministry in others' behalf, instead of wasting shall develop us in all the higher faculties. The outer man may perish in the ministry of human life, but the inner, the true and immortal life, is renewed day by day. The outer being will waste and fall away, the sooner when infected with the corroding rust of *ennui* and uselessness. One of God's prescriptions for a healthy body and a vigorous mind, is, gird every day with usefulness.

Life has an immense compass; Christ's overture of mercy and example has given to it a thrilling enlargement. You can more easily trace the vast worlds that swing in space, than you can define the compass of a well-ordered life. It stretches on into infinity, and only finds its noblest liberty in the unclouded light. But to attain such a destiny, an earnest wrestle is imposed, one like that of Jacob with the angel, bold with persistency, sometimes attended with weariness and wounds, but always crowned with blessing.

That such noble growth is involved in the highest mission of life you must know. The gates of an illimitable kingdom open before you. All the way to its dominion and throne provides the opportunity, the high duties, which well done, can alone fit you for so splendid a coronation. You have already wrought well in the busy vineyard of life, and brought away, in this attainment and that, or in this noble ministry and

that, some abundant and luscious eshcol cluster, and by this service you have been fitted for more, and it should thrill you as an inspiration from God to hear where you now stand as you never have heard it before, a voice from out the bright light saying, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." That varied and marvellous discipline or development of daily duty will bring you on until from the plain you shall go up to the mountain's crest, and in your new found mastery and majesty there will be the glow of transfiguration. This is the culture which constantly gives to the weak the mastery of strength, to the timid the majesty of courage, to the despondent the inspiration of hope, and to the faint-hearted and weary the triumph of success. For the great benefit it will be to all that is noble in you, my young friends you cannot afford to be useless. I cannot tell you what the world would have lost, and how many gems of humanity among women would shine with far less lustre than they do, had it not been for that discipline of usefulness, which was all the better for having had in it sometimes the weight and self-denial of a cross. Dr. Hitchcock says of that princely woman, Mary Lyon, the founder of Mt. Holyoke Seminary: "A sound mind in a sound body was her birth-right. But He who breathed into her clay so much more vital fire than He commonly sees fit to bestow on an individual, next adapted her outward circumstances to its safe keeping. She was not born to ease and affluence. She was not cradled on down. She did not tread on soft

carpets, loll on cushioned sofas, ride at first in her basket-cradle, and afterwards in a couch. So doing and faring, she might have become by middle age so enervated in body and mind as scarce to adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness."

Other circumstances of ease and wealth, counted far more desirable by hundreds of women, would never have made Mary Lyon the eminently useful and gifted woman she was. What a sublime life was hers! Mere indolence and indulgence waste the noble forces of body and mind, waste them as the driving storm wastes nature, but every faculty and force given up to noble endeavor, achieves in a human being what Angelo said of the stony block:

"The more the marble wastes
The more the statue grows."

Aim to be useful, hail the opportunity, and improve the culture of it that you may be more a master in that kingdom where the footfalls of God himself are heard; and when your feet are sore with the long journey, your soul will be amply plumed for flight into the kingdom of the crystal river and the unsetting sun.

I commend usefulness to you as a source of protection and happiness.

There is a perilous element of evil in an aimless, useless life. With such faculties as you possess, and with such appeal as crowds upon you from every side in this busy world, if you have nothing good to engage you, you will not want long for something evil. By a

law of your being you cannot live wholly insensible to the influences that press upon you as the air. If the numerous temptations and evils that constantly beset you do not find your faculties pre-occupied, they will rush in upon and arrest you, as a flood flows where the dike is broken; while on the other hand the demand of usefulness will act as a shield to protect you, both from susceptibility to, and from the assaults of temptation.

Whether of men or women who make their lives a scourge to society, it will be found often that one of their chief snares has been the absence of a noble and useful purpose in life, and so, blasted in the beginning, they have gone on to hopeless ruin.

I believe one of the most serious evils that endanger the youth of both sexes to-day, is random, aimless living, that leaves hundreds of them, in our cities especially, to be entangled in the strong meshes of the net of evil. There never was a time when such a course was so inexcusable and so fraught with evil.

I warn you against the danger of choosing to have nothing to do, and of neglecting to do what you owe to God, to yourself and mankind. Fuller says of Sir Francis Drake, whose master kept him at work, that such "pains and patience in his youth knit the joints of his soul, and made them more solid and compact."

In the common ruin you have no advantage, my young friends, and with a life not devoted to usefulness you will not, nor will any others, find in the folly you have wrought any good reason for your having lived at all.

We may speak consistently of the ethics of usefulness, for in every good thing done there is a moral influence thrown back upon the doer; but to talk of the ethics of uselessness would put us among those who pervert the right ways of the Lord, by calling evil good, and good evil. Everything in and about a really useful man or woman combines as a strong sentinel to stand fast and guard the citadel of the soul, and the tempter must turn away baffled and blushed, to find his victim in some dreamy, indolent, or frivolous life.

He or she only mocks who, while useless, prays not to be led into temptation, but to be delivered from evil, and on the simple ground of personal safety I must urge you to turn away from such. But in addition to protection, you want to be happy. For this you were made, as much as the stars were made to shine, and the birds to sing.

Usefulness, my dear friends, turns the soul into a well-strung harp, every chord trembling to this and that touch of good ministry, and vibrating a music that is as inspiring as it is sweet. Our field may be humble; but if it fills the scope of duty, and only blesses a little child, there is a joy in it akin to that heaven yields. Pharaoh's daughter was not demeaned, but made richer and gladder, crowned a princess as never before or after, by her stoop of love over the waif in the rushes. It would be folly for one of you to write your name in the dust; but never shrink from the condescension, if to render some noble service, to do some

noble thing, you must come away with its soil upon you.

The daisy is of lowly bloom, and in its modest beauty challenges our stoop; and it is well to go down low in worthy service, and find the joy we cannot pluck from inaccessible heights. Pearls do not drop from the sky; there is more joy in blessing a hovel than in gracing a palace. The charitable and noble Princess Eugenia, of Sweden, some time ago determined to erect a hospital for the sick at her own charges. Before it was completed her money was exhausted. That there should be no delay, she promptly and cheerfully sold her diamonds, and the work went forward to completion. Her purpose of usefulness exceeded all cost of self-denial. After the building was completed she visited it, and passing through the wards spoke kindly words to the sick. One man, overcome by her tender benevolence, wept as she approached his bed. The princess was awed and overjoyed at the sight; and, standing by his side, exclaimed: "Ah! now I see my diamonds again." To her every tear was a gem radiant with a glow of love and gratitude that made beautiful response to herself-denying ministry, and as the fingers of an angel, swept all the chords of her soul, and woke it into melody.

I do not wonder that the blessed Master, who broke His heart at the shrine of human need, and who heard the final peal of victory in the pangs of his passion—"for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." You will seek happiness in

many ways; you will touch this string and that, drink from cup rude and chased; now turn where gayety sings, and now where sorrow pines; but I can tell you that in all the varied scope of human experience, you will find nothing that can so transfigure your life into an endless sounding psalm, as usefulness.

Charles Kingsley beautifully weaves the thought with these lines:

“*Do noble things, not dream them,
All day long; and so make life, death,
And the last forever
One calm, sweet joy.*”

I need scarce add that a holy immortality is sure to lift its luminous bow over such a life. It is a noble impulse, my young friends, to desire not to be flung aside as a useless clod at life's close, and a noble purpose to live so as to attain a better destiny than the dust. The life of many all about us plainly indicates that the scope of their aspirations is bounded by the present. Their horizon does not dip beyond, nor flush up with a glory hidden to earthly vision. The seen and the temporal is the compass of their hope, and oblivion the dark night into which its faint glimmer drops. That is pitiable life, and the mere thought of it should wake a shudder in every manly and womanly heart. A useful life fares better. You little think, perhaps, how much we of to-day, in all that is best, purest, and most enduring, are living on the legacy of others. The bright light that plays about you, the innocent mirth that sings in your souls, the blessings that light the lamp of hope and swing it before

you, are strangely mingled with the devoted lives of those who are gone before. Your parents, your teachers, have left an indelible impress upon you that is a light to guide, a shield to protect, and an angel to cheer.

Goodness thrills with the breath of immortality. I must think better of you than to suppose you wish to be forgotten, or remembered as the storm that desolated the home, is remembered. For the good of it, as well as for the joy of it, you should desire to live in the best thought, the best progress, and the cleanest and sunniest memory of the ages, when your mortal pulses have been stilled. And so you may, if in the spirit of Him who comes to consecrate the humblest worthy work, you consecrate your life to highest usefulness. Nothing can break or even jar upon that great harmony that sounds out and sounds on forever from a useful and godly life. You may have what the world can give of indulgence, of fame, of wealth, of glory; but these, at the best, perish in the using. With these you can serve self, but not your God, not imperishable womanhood, not your day and generation. Those who have lived for these are not only gone, but forgotten.

“The coronet is empty show—

The strength and loveliness are hid below.

The shifting wealth to others accrued.

The learning cheers not the grave's solitude.

What's *done* is what remains! Ah, blessed they

Who leave *completed tasks of love* to stay

And answer mutely for them, being dead!

Life was not purposeless, though life be fled.”

To what a purpose you shall have lived, if in the worth and blessing of others, if in the enlargement and consecration of your gifts, and if in the spiritual destiny and immortal crown you have won, the Master says to you: "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Such a life may sometimes lack the appreciation it merits, but God is not unmindful of any labor of faith and love; and if need be, as with Mary, who but for her Lord would have turned away from His disciples with a bruised soul, He will catch up the fragrance of every good ministry in the useful life, and cause it to be sung in the hymns of the ages.

My young friends, life is before you; may it be such as grace forms, immortality crowns, and the poet sings:

"I live for those that love me,
For those that know me true,
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And waits my coming to.
For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrongs that need resistance,
For the future in the distance,
For the good that I can do."



CHAPTER VIII.

BEAUTY.

“What’s female beauty, but an air divine,
Through which the mind’s all gentle graces shine?
They like the sun irradiate all between;
The body charms because the soul is seen.
Hence men are often captives of a face,
They know not why, of no peculiar grace:
Some forms, though bright, no mortal man can bear;
Some, none resist, though not exceeding fair.”— *Young*.

“Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.—*Ps. xc: 17.*”

It seems rather remarkable that an element so common, so universally manifest, and withal so charming as beauty, should so seldom provide a theme for pulpit discourse. It is not usually classed among topics of public discussion, and in its higher forms, has not secured as large a place in literature as it merits.

This seeming slight of so important and instructive a subject, is not the result of that familiarity which breeds contempt on the one hand, nor of that repetition which creates monotony on the other; but rather, I think, of that contentment with the lower forms of beauty so common among us, and of that faint conception of the wide and excellent scope of it, which is inevitable with those who are satisfied with a superficial display. I dare say it has seemed to some of you that my subject is fanciful, and will provide you the amusement that subjects more serious do not fur-


nish. It is possible you may be mistaken in your conjecture, and after all discover in an element so much abused among women, one of God's own greatest and sublimest thoughts. In some form or other, it is a thought or element with which you are familiar.

It is an image that often fills your vision, often lights up in the creations of your imagination, interweaves itself with your desires, your conversations, and not unfrequently with your most diligent, if not always most pious aims.

On this account alone, there will be great advantage in the presentation of a subject like this; your prejudices are enlisted in its behalf, and I shall hope that you will respond to any effort to pluck it from the dust, where so many only see it, and to lift it up where it belongs, as one of the brightest gems of noblest character in woman, and a dazzling perfection of God.

With such a flood of sinless beauty all about us, we are quite inexcusable for the light esteem in which we have so often held it. The perversion and waste of this element is one of the crimes of all ages. It has been and is still employed to conceal the deformity of iniquity, and to garnish and light up the way of evil with gaudy deception.

Its bright threads have often been interwoven with robes that covered a sinful heart, its gems have flashed in the diadem of men and women who were monsters of cruelty and vice, rather than rulers of righteousness and love. I know no element, in itself a moral force, that has been so much abused as



beauty; and for its perversion, and the guilty blush its fair face has often been compelled to wear, woman is responsible to an appalling extent.

But I commenced by a reference to the abundance of it. It is not a rarity in the universe of God.

It is as abundant as the stars that illumine the sky, and the leaves that garnish the forest. God's creation is an achievement, an exhibition of beauty. It was the divine purpose that it should be so. Beauty is not a thing of chance, not an accident; nor is it any more an external decoration with which God saw fit to embellish his great work. It is God's thought of a method of creation. It is a part of the material achievement that inheres in its nature and design, a sublime testimony to its wholeness, and its capacity for the use intended.

As nature works out to the human mind, as we grasp and comprehend its majestic going in its sublime circle of law, that which is evolved to the enlarged consciousness is *beauty*. In creation, as well as in all other right things, the trend of progress is toward a beauty which is now only ideal with us, and which we grasp as we go up, and illustrate in ourselves the highest type of this element as an excellence. Already you may see that it requires more than a comely form and a rosy cheek to make beauty.

With the facilities we enjoy, I repeat we are not excusable for our indifferent estimate and reckless abuse of an element that God has made so princely in creation.

Behold the world-house in which you live! How God has set it above and below and girded it round about with beauty. He has made everything beautiful in his time. What with the splendid arch of the sky, its sweet shining stars, its unjarred and peaceful going of planet, sun, and system, its rosy gate at which morning enters like a new-crowned king, and its flushed portal of sunbeams, through which the day departs; what with the green verdure of hill and dale, the daisy decked carpet of landscape and plain, the majesty of the mountain, the mighty swing of the sea chanting its eternal psalm, the birds warbling among the trees, and ten thousand voices joining to hymn the Creator's praise, what a world of beauty encompasses us!

All of this is but something of Him whose perfection is beauty, and whom only the most beautiful of earth serve and adore as He merits. Look at nature's pictures, and listen to her voices with any sensible purpose, and how full of suggestion, and what numerous and varied touches of perfection she reveals.

When she puts on her fresh spring robes, when she blushes with all the hopes and redolent promises of summer, when she sits in all the matronliness of autumn, when her hair is white with the snow of winter, and is swept wildly with the breath of the tempest—in all, it is her beauty that is most seen. How rich she is, what diamonds sparkle in her crown, what a wealth of graceful shape, and variety of hue and tint, interweaves with her robes, and how splendid is the light that discloses all! Art is often masterly, but at

best 'tis only a copy of complete nature, and in comparison tame. We spring an arch of board, paper, or paint, and victorious and bannered ranks march proudly under it, and our work delights us; but see yon bow, hanging on the black and ruffled face of the cloud—what an arch of beauty is that! and to make it, God had only to fling a few drops of rain in the track of the sun.

If you have fancied that the sum of beauty is to be found in woman fair of face, shapely of form, and splendid in dress and jewel, may it not be that you are mistaken, and that in soulless nature a successful rival may be found? There is nothing about us in the world-house in which we live so common, so abundant, as beauty; and that because it is good, serving so well its purpose in every law, in every service, and in every result, glorifying God. The beauty of nature is not simply an effort at, nor a purpose of decoration; but primarily it is an excellence, an evidence of, and a testimony to the perfection of the work it adorns. So, even here in the irrational, you may learn the true nature and purpose of beauty. True beauty is a growth, an attainment, with us; and many who have prided in its mere external and dusty display, may well feel abashed, when they observe that what is more an illustration of perfection in nature than of ornament or show, cannot be so little in woman as symmetry of form, fairness of face, or elegance of dress, but must be the glowing amethyst of a noble womanly character.

It is pleasing that in the progress of the ages there is coming to be a larger and more becoming appreciation of the beautiful. As education and enlightenment obtain, people get away from that which is rude to that which is more seemly in dress, in the arrangement and adornment of homes, and as well in the manners and customs of society. The development and proper application of the faculty of taste is good; for as the lower conceptions, habits, and prejudices of a people are removed, that which is better and higher more readily take their place, and the beauty or perfection of character is more likely to be secured. Beauty, like every other moral element, is a problem, which men, most and best through the Gospel, are working out, or a perfection toward which all who have aspirations above the dust are moving, and the best result of a correct apprehension of it in nature is manifest when we make it a stepping-stone to that higher and spiritual beauty which is the crown and glory of all.

So it has seemed to me well to place before you, so far as I may be able, a sort of panoramic view of beauty, beginning with its most common manifestation, the material, and passing up to its most permanent and splendid exhibition in the spiritual.

There is something nobler than sun and star, beautiful flower, sounding sea, and towering mountain; and if God has put such munificence of beauty in these, how still brighter must not the jewel be, set by His own hand in those who were made in His own image. Beauty of person, or physical beauty, is His gift, and

is not to be despised. A high-souled mother is grateful for her child's beauty, and if God has given to your face and form that which appeals to good taste and high admiration, when homeliness and deformity repel, He has given you what He has numbered among the talents for which you should be grateful, and for which you must answer when He comes to make up His jewels.

I do not believe it is a sin for a young woman to know that she possesses a beautiful form and face, nor is it any violation of modesty that she shall do every right thing to preserve her physical excellences, and to employ them for every end that is pure and noble.

We thank God that we have health, that we have happiness, that we were born in a Christian land, and that we have an amiable disposition; and if a woman is beautiful, if there is really no mistake about it, if it be a fact that stands out as a sunbeam and not a fancy of her imagination, why shall she not thank God for that? That women have the advantage over men in this regard is universally admitted. Poets, philosophers, and great men in all time have admired and woven the beauty of woman with the rhythmic song and profound thought of the ages. The most delicate and charming description of the Church in the Bible is enshrined, like the central jewel in a setting, in the queenly, richly attired form of a beautiful woman. Here art has found its climax, and angels their earthly form and grace.

As a rule, women have more personal beauty than

men; and while you have no need to blush for, nor to be proud over it, you are to remember that mere physical beauty carries with it a force, and indeed has a mission, in those who possess it, that does not devolve upon those who are less comely. It may be to you and to others a blessing or a curse; and, though you may not have thought of it, you are responsible for the gift and result of your personal beauty. There is a great charm and a great peril in it. Intended for a blessing, it has been the snare and curse of thousands. If the history of the achievements of woman's beauty were written, it would make a thrilling page. Here and there it would have in it the sheen of heaven; but more frequently it would flame with the hot fires of envy, jealousy, and hate, and drip with human blood.

The beauty of the daughter of Herodias bewitched the dissolute king, and extorted a promise from him that reddened his hands and hers with the blood of an innocent man. The Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, endowed with masterly gifts of mind, was noted for her personal beauty. The vilest blot on her name is that she employed it for the perpetration of crimes that have made her memory infamous. Strong, brave men fell before her blandishments and charms, and empires felt the shock of her soft and graceful tread. To her name history adds many who excelled in personal beauty and splendid crimes, and who to-day only have place among the ill-famed, their beauty perverted and abused, only the unsightly mockery of what it was

meant to be. To these—how long the list!—should we add those whom silly mothers have worshiped and ruined, and whose beauty, dragged down to the low parade of vanity, and spent in wicked indulgence, has been their curse, and in many instances has interwoven indelible scandal and immortal disgrace with the family name and history. Beauty is a gift of God not to be despised, when like the unsullied light of stars it garnishes the casket that holds a pure and lofty soul; but when it is only the mocking shame that conceals deformity within, how pitiful it is, and how criminal is the profanation of a gift so fair.

And so you may make it, my young friends, for:

“The cunning complicity of beauty claimeth mind and soul,
Though many coins of base alloy pass current for the true;
And albeit fairness in the creature oft co-exist with excellence,
Yet many an angel shape hath been tenanted by a fiend.”

I can think of nothing that should be more offensive to a true-minded woman than the proud display, corrupt intrigue, and unwomanly use of her personal beauty. When the lower or physical form of it plants itself before men as an exhibition, as a snare, and as a protest to the acquisitions of all higher and better forms of it, there is no estimating what harm it can accomplish.

The bold, perverted, blushless beauty of woman, a beauty which kindles pride and gratifies selfishness, is a snare against which I warn you. It will not only work your ruin, but it will add other names to the long roll of those whose lives have gone out in dark-

ness, and whose memory is encircled with the black rim of infamy.

Whenever a woman's beauty becomes the topic of newspaper and personal gossip, the dusty signal hung out to attract attention and draw the crowd, when it must parade itself before the public through art, and the prompt exhibition of the victim when opportunity permits, and all with the delighted consent of her who boasts it—when, as Milton puts it:

“Beauty is nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, and feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder,”

then is it thin enough, and the very thought of such humiliation of so noble a gift, should kindle a blush on every woman's cheek. When a young woman is more conscious of her beauty than of any other element or faculty of her nature, when she is flattered by the stir it has made in society, and is best known by that fair distinction, when by no excellence of character, and no useful ministry of life, she overshadows the fanciful vision on which she feeds, and about which she dreams, then is she weak in all the elements that live, then is she homely of soul, and it will not be long until she will become that most pitiable of all woman-kind—a faded beauty. We are favored if beautiful, but we should be unconscious of it, as we are of the beatings of a healthy heart, and of the pulses that throb in an active brain. A woman who is caught up with her personal beauty, and spends her time in touching it up, in improving

the features God has embellished, who pets it, guards it, takes it out for exhibition as a fine horse is led out at an exposition, a woman who worships her beauty, will find no time for anything else; and whatever charm of personal appearance she may boast, she will most likely have in addition the unenviable endowment of an empty head, and a frivolous heart.

If you are blest with beauty, prize it, take care of it, consecrate it to holiest purposes; but bear in mind you cannot do this by beholding it in a mirror, by dressing it in costly fabrics, by setting it in jewels of splendor, or by touching it up with those cosmetics which indicate that the obsequies of beauty are past, and then sending it out to show itself. No, if you would improve and preserve your beauty, you must do it by the development of the inside, and not by any sham work on the outside.

'Tis a beautiful soul that keeps the face beautiful. The two can only survive the wear of time when they are found together. Nabal was a churlish man; but Abigail, his wife, "was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance." No beauty can last that does not serve; make an idol of it, and it is as evanescent as a summer cloud, and forthwith all its glory vanishes. In Shakspeare's lines, such

"Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good,
A shining gloss that fadeth suddenly,
A flower that dies when first it 'gins to bud,
A brittle glass that's broken presently;
A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, faded, broken, dead within an hour."

The least gift is not to be despised, and the least, if properly improved and employed, may have given to it the tinge of immortality, and will contribute some beams of light to the eternal destiny, but if that least be all, and it be wasted, it will leave you blasted and poor forever. Physical or personal beauty is a lower form of this element, and unless it get its best grace and commendation from that which is higher and holier, it is only as the cheap fading tinsel, the powder and color with which a clown arrays himself for the sport or the contempt of the crowd. Gotthold hearing a young lady much praised for her beauty, asked, "What kind of beauty do you mean? * * * I see well that you have been looking no farther than the sign which Nature displays outside the house; but have never asked for the host who dwells within. * * * It is virtuous and godly beauty alone which Scripture honors, expressly declaring, on the other hand, that a fair woman which is without discretion is as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout (Prov. xi. 22). Many a pretty girl is like the flower called the imperial crown, which is admired no doubt for its showy appearance, but despised for its unpleasant odor. Were her mind as free from pride, selfishness, luxury, and levity, as her countenance from spots and wrinkles, and could she govern her inward inclinations as she does her external carriage, she would have none to match her. But what better is the apple for its rosy skin, or who cares for the beautiful brown of the nut, if they be worm-eaten and fill the mouth

with corruption? Even so external beauty of person deserves no praise, unless matched with the inward beauty of virtue and holiness."

While then we should include this lower order of beauty among God's gifts, not to be worshiped and debased on the one hand, nor despised on the other, we are to remember that instead of this being the sum of beauty, it is but a single thread in the fringe of its ample robe; 'tis the mere shadow, not the nobler and enduring substance; there is a higher form of beauty, whose appeal comes to us with the sanction and lustre of God upon it; and to this we must listen, else we shall despise the noblest and richest jewel of womanly character, and in despising it shall as well mock and waste the personal grace in which it has so often shone.

In the lower sense, all cannot be beautiful. Even among your own sex some have nothing to boast here. I think it will be found true that the majority of women who have been noted for noble and useful lives, were not remarkable for personal beauty. Under the blaze of the chandelier, in the drawing-room, and in company with the gay, of whom you often see the most in the furnishings and splendors of wardrobes and toilet, these would appear at some disadvantage; but when the beauty of service, intelligence and noble aims are demanded, these would fill the place with a light and beauty that abash the help of art, and the show and tinsel of fickle fashion.

The poorest, the least in rank and social fame may have this higher beauty; for it is not a thing created,

or woven of fancy colors and costly attire, but attained. In the beauty of nature God has written His name, but in this higher beauty of character and life He sets His image as in nothing else.

In nature, I have said it is the perfection of adaptation, a harmony of parts, of mission, and of result. In men and women, it is excellence, symmetry and lustre of character. It is the harmony of your soul-faculties and of your life-work with the purpose of God.

A complete, a virtuous, a noble-hearted, high-souled, godly woman, is beautiful. Ruskin says the poet has given a perfect description of true womanly beauty in these two lines:

“A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet.”

Then he adds—“The perfect loveliness of a woman's countenance can only consist in that majestic peace which is founded in the memory of happy and useful years,—full of sweet records; and from the joining of this with that more majestic childishness, which is still full of change and promise;—opening always modest at once, and bright, with hope of better things to be won and to be bestowed.”

As you become ennobled in your conscience, equipped and enlarged in all the noble virtues and faculties of your moral being, and as the consciousness of noble duty becomes deep and real, you will become beautiful. In other words, the highest, purest beauty, the beauty you must have if you would illustrate that excellence which is the imperishable glory of your sex,

is the beauty of mastery and completeness in all the higher faculties of your nature. She is not beautiful, however complete on the outside, who is faulty and unsightly within.

God is just as much the source of beauty in its highest form, as He is of love, and if you would have it you must grow and achieve where His light falls upon you. The standard of beauty you are to be concerned about and to aspire to, is not the personal grace, the physical show, but the moral quality of beauty. That is only the perishable tinge of beauty which the hot fingers of fever can pluck from the cheek, sorrow blot from the brow, and death strike from the eye. True beauty, whether in faculty or life, is immortal. Just as you secure the mastery of one of the noble elements of womanly character, just as these elements reach out and show themselves, rather than some material distinction or boast, you become lovely, luminous, beautiful. There is no substitute for these, my young friends, and no disadvantage of face or form may blight their charm. Florence Nightingale was not a handsome lady, but she was a beautiful woman, and the charm of her noble life still glows in the best thought and the divinest admiration of the purest among mankind.

It is pleasing to look upon a beautiful face, flushed and bright, moulded by the hand of God, or upon a human form graceful and symmetrical; but the most splendid vision to be seen on earth is a beautiful character. The artist is delighted at sight of fair features

and comely shape ; great thoughts beat on the brain of the master, and the chords of his soul vibrate melody when some thrilling harmony rolls upon his ear ; but to the vision of the best men, of angels, and of God, there is no sight that embosoms so much of the excellent and beautiful as the divine harmony of a complete character.

It is this sort of beauty to which Peter refers, when he urges that the adorning of the wives consist not in external show and dress ; “but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” 1 Peter iii. 4. There is great force in the last word in the original. Dr. Bushnell says of it : “I know not anything ever said in Scripture of mortal beauty and perfection which carries an impression so superlative as this word *polutes*—all perfect, precious, dear above price, and that in the sight of the Lord ; as if it were conceived that a woman, dignified by such internal beauty, is really the finest mould of created being ever looked upon by even God himself.”

We are beautiful just in proportion as we are removed from imperfection, and advance toward the spiritual ; just as the lower elements of our nature, our material and animal part, go down, and as our better part, our imperishable being, comes into proper dominion. True beauty is beauty of the heart. The bloom will wither out of your cheek, the lustre of your eye will drop into darkness, the vigor of your form will

waste, and its proud stateliness will bow; but moral forces, soul faculties, spiritual beauties, these ever grow, and never perish; they are watered at God's own fountains, and lightened by God's own touch; the passing ages do not waste, but increase their lustre, worth, and glory; and in them the eternal destiny of true life is enshrined, as the beauty of angels is blended with their song.

Now when beauty comes to be such an excellence of character, when we aspire to its higher forms rather than pride in or seek to cultivate its lower and external show, then it is sure to produce a corresponding illustration in the life. The charm in one's self, and in all others who are in the way of moral progress, is not any more so much in any finished mould of the face, any brightness of the eye, but in those great soul forces which manifest themselves in proper deportment and goodly deeds, as stars show their beauty by their shining.

What the true-minded see, is not the polish of the external, but the more beautiful womanhood of the internal. It is not the grace of Mary's person we think about, and that is rung on to-day in the chiming of the Gospel, and so when the names of Paul, the Wesleys, Luther, Hannah More, Florence Nightingale, Mary Lyon, and of a host more, light up before us; but it is character coined into beautiful deeds, that furnishes an ever-brightening apocalypse for the admiration of men and angels.

In the character and lives of these I see truth trans-

figured; and when truth radiates the face of woman, or any one, it is such an element of beauty as nothing in all the material universe can furnish. In any event, truth is beautiful; it is the lie that is homely and offensive, whether it appears in the pretensions of man or woman; but there are always occasions in life that enlarge and magnify the glory of truth. In all history there is no sublimer or more beautiful spectacle than woman's devotion to truth, when to maintain it she has suffered her fair form to be flung to the wild beasts, or bowed her neck to the fatal block. I saw an engraving a few days ago in an auction-room. It presented that scene in Scott's *Mid-Lothian*, where Effie Deans is on trial for her life, and when her sister Jennie is called to testify. On her testimony hangs the life or death of her sister. A little divergence from the truth would save her; but she cannot blot the fair face of truth, and though the sword of justice cleaves her own heart, and she sees her old father fall dead from the shock, she stands for the truth, and lets the awful cloud burst upon and engulf her in its woe.

That was beautiful, my young friends, and it will be enough if you are taught by it, that truth in high things and in low, in the light and in the shade, is an element of beauty, and that there is no beauty worthy your thought or your care where truth is wanting.

The manifestation of pure love is another element of beauty.

For this God has fitted you in a manner that justly gives you distinction. Of course love may be debased

until the soil on its fair face makes it revolting. But set like a jewel in the moral and spiritual, is there any thing more beautiful than love? What of excellence on earth can match a mother's love, or a worthy wife's devotion? The devotion, the pure and undying love of Carlotta for Maximilian, has been to me as the glow of a benediction; it struck and thrilled on the best pulses of my being, and the tender vibrations have never ceased; still, while the waves roll over that poor broken heart, her devotion hangs in my vision as a picture of beauty. She was beautiful of face and fair of form, but I never think of these; my admiration grows for and clings to the moral elements that still light up in her womanly devotion.

There is often a vast amount of sham, cheat, and mere sentiment thrown about love; but when it blooms in a life that stoops low to serve, when it soars high in its aspirations, and bows in truest adoration before Him whose inclusive perfection it is, then is it the perfection of beauty, and who looks upon it, beholds the face of God.

To these may be added the disposition to self-denial, the spirit of amiableness and gentleness, the aspiration for holiness. All these are elements of beauty, and separately and combined they have hung such pictures in the vision and thought of men, as have proven an untold impulse to all noble progress, and are to-day, and forever will be, unrivalled by any scenery of sky, mountain or landscape, or by the most princely achievements of the masters.

Natural beauty comes first to our vision, but it is not first in time or value, then comes physical beauty, a higher form of the natural, then comes the moral which is still higher, and on until we have attained the spiritual, the bright portal opening to the heavenly. Nature may or may not have done much for you, and as to the moral and spiritual you may or may not have done much for yourself; but it is in these last the true and imperishable elements of beauty are found. The good that is to be secured, and done in this life :

“These call beauty forth,
Give it the stamp celestial, and admit it
To sisterhood with angels.”

The best, the most splendid achievements that bless the race, and constitute the most inspiring apocalypse that moves before us in the noblest progress of mankind, has been wrought by those whose souls thrilled with a divine inspiration; and to men and angels the vision is beautiful.

Very wonderfully has God wrought upon the minds and hearts of men, in working out the problem of beauty, which is perfection.

My young friends, you may have much that is merely material, and yet beautiful; as a rule you are a favored class in the natural endowment of beauty, and the world may be better even for this; but I trust I have not failed so to commend to your attention as to exalt in your esteem that higher beauty which God enjoins, and without which all mere personal adorn

ments may only be to you as the silver fringe and the gilded handles of the casket that holds the dead—the mere tinsel that screens a lifeless and unbeautiful soul.

I have opened a “Gate Beautiful” to you; stand under its luminous arch, and hear God's voice from within, saying: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

The young lady about whose heart there is entwined, and along whose life-path is scattered such a cluster of pearls, is beautiful, and needs not as a commendation any grace of form, or trimming and flash of jewel and dress. Mere personal beauty, ungirded with higher excellence, “is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

It only remains, my young friends, for me to bring to your attention that last and highest form of beauty, the perfection of humanity, and the full disclosure of the majesty of God in the heavenly world. This is the cap-stone placed by angelic hands, and amid angelic shouts, upon the temple; this, the final and the sweetest note, that is to complete that thrilling harmony toward which the ages are bearing us, and in whose endless roll, I trust, you will have part. I direct your attention to this as a final, and, if possible, that a more effectual emphasis may be given to the

appeal I have endeavored to make, in behalf of that noblest, highest beauty with which the grace of Jesus Christ alone can endow the soul and adorn the life. I cannot think of anything more inspiring and delightful than the thought of human beings, such as you are, attaining to all possible perfection here, and to complete beauty hereafter—your Lord's own unblemished image.

Could anything be more beautiful than the assurance, lifted as a bow of light over present limitation, that with such beauty as God's grace can give you now, it is only a step in that progress the consummation of which is the higher beauty of completeness. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

When you have come to that throne, and every one of you may sit upon it as a queen, then the vision in glory will be as complete as was that in nature, which in the beginning was hailed by the shout of the sons of God and of the morning stars.

Then embarrassment and monotony will be gone, every limitation will have blushed from view, all necessities of the physical will have vanished, and there will be no fret for the absence of beauty, and no waste, no blot, no shame in the cultivation and display of it—we shall be beautiful as the angels of God.

It is this imperishable and god-like beauty I would have you illustrate in character and life now, and be robed in as a garment hereafter. Set this beside

that which many women idolize, boast and often offensively parade, and the poor caricature of the flesh becomes as a tallow dip held up by the full-orbed sun. If you think about, dream about, pet and boast, display and trust, your fair form and beautiful face, they will fade and grow offensive in your own sight, they will throw shadows into your future, and you will lie down amid their ruins and wish to die; but if the beauty of the Lord our God be upon you, the future will be as the gate of the morning, and as you go toward it, it will prove a gate of pearl, opening to your touch, and the consummation will be the perfection of beauty,—your eyes shall behold the King in his beauty, and you shall dwell in the home of the blessed—heaven the beautiful.

“Eternal mansions! bright array!

Oh, blest exchange! transporting thought!

Free from th’ approaches of decay,

Or the least shadow of a spot.”



CHAPTER IX

EDUCATION.

“ Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul according well,
May make one music as before.”

Tennyson.

“ Think of her worth, and think that God did mean
This worthy mind should worthy things embrace ;
Blot not her beauties with thy thoughts unclean,
Nor her dishonor with thy passion base.”

Sir J. Davies.

“ The prosperity of a country depends not on the abundance of its revenues, nor on the strength of its fortifications, nor on the beauty of its public buildings ; but it consists in the number of its cultivated citizens, in its men of education, enlightenment and character ; here are to be found its true interest, its chief strength, its real power.”

This wise and comprehensive utterance of Luther is a seed thought, and contains in condensed form that which applies to you whom I address, and to which, in some degree elaborated, I wish to invite your attention.

That which occupies the mind for the most part when we speak of education, is the cultivation of the intellectual faculties. But our subject has a far wider scope than mere mental culture, and it is this more

comprehensive view we propose to present. Taken in this wider compass, involving the entire range of human faculty, the higher as well as the lower, we have a topic second in importance to none in the series to which your attention has been directed. Indeed, in large part, this subject of education inspheres in itself all that has been, or may yet be said on the character and life of woman. Education is not a thing exclusively of the schools, nor of the early years of human life. It is a perpetual condition of our existence, and is inwoven with the growth of every part. It is not likely that the education of the intellectual faculties will come to be as wise in method and as noble in aim as the worth and necessity of the cause demand, until the development of the entire being is included in our conception of true culture. The neglect of one part is apt to defeat the purpose of the most faithful attention to another part.

At the beginning I would have you conceive of education as something that belongs to your character, your life, and your destiny; something that may be promoted, but cannot be finished in a few years at school; but is so inwoven with your growth in every way as to be identical with it.

Indeed, so vital is this theme for young women, and so peculiarly does it stand related to the marvellous age in which we live, that instead of presenting a few thoughts in a single chapter, an entire volume, without occasion for redundancy, might be given up to it. Manifestly there has been great progress both with

respect to the methods and the purposes of female education, and it is partly on this account that we see more distinctly than ever to-day the superior advantages which our daughters enjoy on the one hand, and as well the mistakes and abuses which still embarrass this important subject on the other hand.

Female education is still hampered by misconception, and in its methods and object is not as free from mistake as it might be, and must come to be, if the young women of the land are to be made adequate to the splendid opportunities and grave responsibilities that in this age engird their lives. Perhaps we shall never attain our ideal in this matter; but that is no reason why we should not hold it up, and press toward it with constant and becoming zeal. This subject has a special importance when applied to young women, for two reasons. First, as some one has said, "When you educate a woman, you educate a race." Women have most to do in shaping the character, in directing the life, and in determining the destiny of humanity; hence the education of women involves issues of the most serious and far-reaching kind. Then secondly, as I have intimated, the burden of fault in the matter of education lies rather with female than with male culture.

We all know that young men are educated, as a rule, with a purpose far more definite and comprehensive than is usual in the education of young women. Sometimes the fault is with the parents, who, looking only on the surface, want education to be to their

favoring daughters what gay feathers are to a bird; sometimes it is the fault of teacher and system when they estimate human life and accomplishments by the position they attain, and the show they make in society; and sometimes it is the fault of the young miss herself, when she contemplates no higher end than the use of just as few letters in the pronunciation of a word as possible, and the fame, which in her case is an empty bubble, of having attended boarding school, in which, whether scant or otherwise, she got more out of the boarding than from the school. Happily the rude prejudice which once obtained so generally among men and women, that the daughters do not require anything like clever mental culture, has passed away, and we have come to a time when illiteracy in a woman is just as unsightly, and as much deplored, as it is in a man.

It is a good omen that in all enlightened communities vulgar ignorance is looked upon as an inexcusable and unnecessary reproach.

The function of education is not simply to communicate something we do not know, but also to develop what we are. It aims to nourish into vigor, and to give best direction to our faculties, when it is what it should be. In your early years, whatever your natural gifts, or whatever your notions, it is the little you can do and know, rather than the much, for which you are remarkable.

On every hand, whether you believe it or not, you are beset with limitation. You may have taken up a

drop or two, but your cup is full with a drop, while the deep sounding sea sweeps before you. Your faculties have only the reach of an infant's arm, and your compass of embrace is correspondingly small. But the possibilities of development, whether moral or mental, are wonderful, and with proper education you may lift your short arm to the stars.

Education is giving mastery to your faculties, it is the development of the germ faculties within you; and as these are brought out, and wisely employed, your womanhood becomes royal and fills its compass. It is said of Angelo, that walking one day through an obscure street in Florence, he saw a fine block of marble lying neglected in a yard, half buried in the debris. Indifferent to company and apparel, he set to work to clear away the rubbish, and to rescue the stone from its filthy surroundings.

His companions looked on with astonishment, and asked him what he wanted with that worthless piece of rock. "Oh! there is an angel in the stone;" was the answer, "and I must get it out." The marble was taken to his studio, and after hard and patient toil he brought the angel forth. His cultured eye saw the glory of art in the rude block, and by the ministry of his cultured skill he set an image in the niche of fame that reflects honor upon his name to-day. At first we are only as the rude block that lay in the rubbish; in the widest view it is the purpose of education to bring out the angel, and to set its mighty pulses going in the direction intended by the Creator. No young

woman in our day need remain in neglect, like the block discovered by the master. The abundance and availability of means of culture is a distinction of our time; and while all may not be learned, yet to a commendable degree all may be intelligent, educated so as to be rescued from the reproach of ignorance.

It did not use to be so. It is true all cannot afford the embellishments, the more elaborate facilities of higher education; yet so free and so numerous are the ordinary and many excellent means of culture, that ignorance among young women, or any other class, can hardly be attributed any more to poverty, lack of opportunity, or conditions of misfortune—not to these so much, I am sure, as to indolence, or a passion for such frivolous indulgence, as blunts the intellectual faculties and wastes all moral forces. There is some excuse, young ladies, for your mothers, who, I am sure, are not wanting in useful accomplishments; they had far less advantage than you have; but there is none for you, if you fail to acquire a large amount of useful knowledge. If half the time, and less than half the strength, given by many young women to show and fashion and frivolity, and to the reading of vapid, empty trash, were devoted to sensible and useful acquisition, many of them would emulate some who have attained name and fame in science, and art, and literature, and in domestic economy, and in other fields of knowledge. It is an offense to a well-balanced and intelligent mind, and must bring a blush to a true woman's cheek, to see a young woman of much pre-

tense, of show and prominence in society, who is unread and uncultured in those departments of knowledge about which ordinarily intelligent people are wont to converse. Paul charged Timothy not to neglect the gift within him, and with the advantages of school or not, it is a sin in a day like ours, if endowed but with one talent, to hide it away in a napkin.

The mind is healthiest and always progressive when properly employed. If you waste your opportunity, make no diligent and determined effort to draw out and tax your faculties with a wider compass—

“Your mind shall sink a blighted flower,
Dead to the sunbeam and the shower—
A broken gem, whose inborn light
Is scattered ne’er to reunite.”

Accepting the suggestion of the beautiful figure of the Hebrew poet, when he prays, “that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace,” it is easy to see how useful service and graceful accomplishments combine in female education. What is wanted is strength for use, and beauty and grace for inspiration; and this applies to the whole scope of proper education, and belongs to its mastery in the culture of body, mind, or soul. To maintain these in right proportion is the great matter, and here, as we shall observe farther on, many fail.

Heber Newton, in his “Womanhood,” says, “The prayer of every people may well arise: That our daughters may be, not as the finished forms of useless beauty, set as mere ornaments in the niches of the walls, or

poised in idle exhibition of themselves upon the pinnacles of the temple, but as the corner-columns, staying, supporting, upholding the whole social structure upon their strengthfulness; and, because of this nobleness of use, wrought into utmost grace of form, polished until every inner vein of beauty stands forth clear and lustrous, efflorescent into whatsoever richness of sculpture and splendor of color may crown the patient use of the pillar with the perfect honor of the capital."

In turning now from general to specific statement, it will not be amiss to speak briefly on *Physical Education*. Indeed it has occurred to me, that when we come to speak of the education of young women, it is attention to the body that needs special notice, for I think it must be widely felt that a very general neglect of the physical is one of the most serious mistakes of American female culture. From indifference, or from ignorance of physical law, we seem to have forgotten that young women have bodies as well as minds, and that they are not of giant mold. What is included in what is termed a liberal course of education is crowded within a few years, years of the very greatest importance to the physical constitution; and in consequence there is no time to give attention to the body, for the mind is taxed to its utmost, and books and accomplishments have a monopoly of both time and strength, and instead of allowing the physical to develop, and bodily vigor to accumulate, they are wasted, and not unfrequently sacrificed. I think this is a moderate statement, and I am sure it is worthy the serious

thought of young women, and of those who have the supervision or conduct of their education in charge.

The fault is not wholly with schools and teachers. It is a sin for which both parents and American life are partially responsible. A lady of culture, writing to Dr. Todd a few years ago, said: "I glory in the opportunities for the culture of American women, but I pray do not abuse them. Let the girls have time to *grow* as well as to study. If they are not finished scholars at eighteen, what matters it, if they are healthy in body and mind?" It is true, young women are themselves very often responsible for the abuse that weakens when it does not shatter the physical constitution; but that is no reason why the demands and methods of culture should be guilty of a like offence.

I am well aware that in some instances great care is given to the proper development of the body, and a few schools include physical education in the course; but still the tendency to give too slight an emphasis to this very important part of female education, and to crowd young women beyond physical endurance, that a prescribed course may be gone through within a given time, is an evil by far too general. What we have need to aim at more, is symmetrical education. The body is just as much God's gift as the mind, and it is just as wicked to abuse the one as the other. These are so related that the one cannot be healthy and vigorous when the other is neglected and allowed to fall into weakness and pain. They are both governed by law, and it is sad to see a young woman cul-

tivate her mind at the expense of her body, and all the sadder when we remember that without health, her mental acquisitions may avail but little. Some one has said: "Intellect in an enfeebled body is like gold in a spent swimmer's pocket—it only makes him sink the sooner." Education must always be faulty when it lacks proportion. No man builds up the handsome front of his house first and alone, but with a good foundation first, the four walls are all carried up together. There is much education that looks only to the ornamental front; we want to raise aloft the glowing dome before there are any strong pillars on which it can rest; we reverse nature's order, and cultivate the top of the tree without regard to roots and trunk and branch, and when we are done the whole is a withered thing without beauty and bloom.

Mr. Smiles says: "Cultivate the physical exclusively, and you have an athlete or a savage; the moral only, and you have an enthusiast or a maniac; the intellectual only, and you have a diseased oddity—it may be, a monster." It is only by wisely training all three together that we get the very best type of manhood or womanhood. This is often forgotten—often by the student, and as well by the teacher—and the result is disastrous in all the relations of life. For some time a successful effort has been made to raise the standard of female education. Some colleges now admit females, and others are being founded exclusively for women with a basis of collegiate advantage. The movement is in part a response to the plea that women

have not had an equal chance with men, and in part to the appeal of the times calling for qualifications adequate to her enlarging sphere. She is now invited to take her place with young men in the college class; and though endowed, as a rule, with less physical vigor than her companions, she is challenged to become the rival of these. There is just one fear about it, and that is the breaking down of the physical constitution, which seems to me to be inevitable. I have maintained in all these chapters that there is a law of proportion in the development and mission of the sexes, and it cannot be broken in the matter of education without harm.

As in everything else, I believe women are to be educated as women, and not as men. I do not believe that women are inferior in mind to men—in some respects they are superior; but I do know that her body is not masculine, if her notions and ways sometimes are, and she cannot endure the same amount of physical wear in mental effort with the other sex, nor is it necessary she should. It is a dear-won prize to secure equality with men, as it is called, and to out-rival them in the school or college, if the poor girl has given away the bloom on her cheek to gratify her own and her mother's pride, or to satisfy the notion of some strong-minded one that has spoken more glibly than wisely.

Let woman have every advantage, all the culture which her own peculiar organization can endure; let her become scholarly to the fullest possible extent,

and weave her name if she can with the learning of the ages; but let there be no effort to push the anemone forward into an oak, "nor to turn the dove out to wrestle with storms and winds under the idea that she may just as well be an eagle as a dove."

A physician, writing for the *New York Observer* some time ago, said: "In no part of female education is there so much need of reform as in that of physical culture. If the standard of scholarship is to be raised higher and higher in all our schools for girls, and no greater attention is to be paid to the laws of health and life, grave consequences may be apprehended."

President Eliot, in addressing the alumni of Harvard University a few years ago, said: "Now everything depends with us, and in the learned professions, upon *vigor of body*. The more I see of the future of young men that go out from these walls, the more it is brought home to me that professional success, and success in all the learned callings, depends largely upon the vigor of body, and that the men who win great professional distinction have that as the basis of their activity."

This applies with equal force to young women, and all the more necessary is the condition of health if they are to become competitors with men in the learned professions, and in various departments of business; but it is above all important when we remember that women are in so large part the "educators of the race."

Mr. Ruskin, whose wisdom gets emphasis from his

experience, in speaking of the kind of education to fit woman for her sphere, says: "The first of our duties to her—no thoughtful persons now doubt this—is to secure for her such physical training and exercise as may confirm her health, and perfect her beauty; the highest refinement of that beauty being unattainable without splendor of activity and of delicate strength."

What is demanded is that physical education be no longer overlooked, that it be not entirely left even to parents or pupils, but that it be included in our systems of culture, and that it become just as definite a purpose, and just as arbitrary a condition in the course of study, as the mastery of English grammar or any other branch of knowledge. Never until then will the truth of that wholesome adage: "A sound mind in a sound body," be illustrated as it merits, and as it may be, in the young women of the land.

Finally, young ladies, do not forget that perhaps, after all, you have most to do in this important matter. You can baffle and render ineffectual any rules that may be adopted for your physical advantage, and by imprudent habits of life, of custom and fashion, by a love of the follies of society, and a rash gratification of ambition and pride, you may join the large company of your own class who are hastening their own step to an early grave. I charge it upon you to take care of your health, do every right thing to develop, to educate your physical being into physical grace and strength; and to the accomplishment of this noble purpose, have no fears, and count it far from disgrace, to

grapple with those home duties which have not demeaned your mothers; for whether your circumstances require it or not, your physical being demands the discipline of work, solid work, work that will prudently tax your physical forces without exhaustion, but not without a weariness that will make rest sweet. However much this may offend the delicate sensibility of the over-refined, I am frank to say to you that as a matter of health, you cannot afford to hand all the work of the home over to some other one, possibly the already over-burdened mother. I believe the great want of many young women to-day, both for happiness, for usefulness, and especially for health, is some suitable, useful work. Education and refinement that lift the possessor above the humblest useful ministry, and lead any one to scorn such service, have cost too much when only a trifle has been expended to obtain them. Some one says: "Motion is all Nature's law. Action is man's salvation, physical and mental. He only is truly wise who lays himself out to work till life's latest hour; and that is the man who will live the longest, and live to the most purpose." It is just as true and just as necessary for women.

The idea that is growing among us, that our daughters are to be reared and educated to do nothing, actually to scorn work, is an evil that merits reprobation, and is telling on the physical constitution of the present generation. Care is like rust on the polished blade; but prudent, useful work is to the human body what the sun and shower of spring are to the flowers

Men and women often count it an evil, and try to get along with as little of it as possible; but I say to you, young ladies, if you would develop your physical form into vigor and beauty, you can do it by becoming work in such way as will put the blush upon all pretensions of art and elegance of dress. Count work a misfortune, if you like; but if it be an evil, idleness is a curse.

“Without e’en this would come a heavier bale—
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.”

From the education of the body let us turn now to the culture of the mind. The development of the intellectual faculties has come to be alike one of the evidences and excellences of the progress of our time. Here, as has been intimated, an advantage has come to woman which she well merits, but did not once enjoy. With the enlarged mission the age accords, and Providence so distinctly marks out to woman, it is manifest that she will need a mental culture better suited to qualify her for her new responsibilities than she has heretofore enjoyed. There must be harmony between the sphere woman is to fill, and the mental culture she is to receive.

But there is undoubtedly much female culture that does not come up to this standard. Much that is regarded as suitable culture for women is undoubtedly superficial, indefinite in its aim, and unavailable for any useful purpose amid the ordinary duties of life. Whatever other purpose education may serve, if it does not fit a woman for her noblest and widest kingdom in the home, it has largely failed.

I can conceive of three legitimate objects in the development of our mental faculties—three, however, that must not be taken alone, but are only worth an existence when they are linked together. The first of these I mention, not meaning that it shall or always can be first in the acquisition of knowledge, is *enjoyment*. To an expanding mind there is wonderful exhilaration in the mastery of principles, in the excitement and rivalry of study, and in the accumulation of knowledge; and hence it is with an almost boundless enthusiasm that men, and women too, have pursued their favorite studies, delighted with each new victory won, as a Christian is overjoyed with each additional promotion in, or new revelation of Christian experience. But it must be borne in mind that the prime object of mental culture is far from gained when we have felt these great pulses of joy thrill in the soul.

Education that has no higher aim than literary pleasure is selfish, and should be reproachful to a cultivated mind. A man or woman who has been endowed with gifts in a certain direction, and who, for the mere enjoyment of it, or the flattery success brings to pride, drinks selfishly from the cup her gifts put into her hand, is not improving her talents as God intended. Dr. Phelps, in his recent and excellent volume on "Men and Books," says: "A studious man, in dressing-gown and slippers, sitting in the midst of a choice library, which is adorned with works of art and costly relics of antiquity, yet from which not a thought goes out to the intellectual or moral improve-

ment of mankind, is a model of refined and fascinating self-hood."

This may not be your peril yet, my young friends; but you may come to a time when you shall have gained mastery in some department of knowledge, and you may be tempted to drink alone from its crystal spring, lest sharing the inspiring draught might exhaust the fountain. If you have acquired useful knowledge or skill, you have a right to be happy in and over your attainment; but you may not be selfish, for no joy can endure, or is worthy to play on the chords of a soul such as yours, that you are not ready to share with others. There are great needs all about us that make loud, and sometimes piteous, appeal to the cultured among men and women; and if you have been blessed with the development of the higher faculties of intellect, you may not revel selfishly in the glory of your better endowment, but should magnify your joy, and enlarge your capacity, by lifting those below you up. A useless educated man or woman is not a character above reproach.

To quote again from Dr. Phelps: "At a sublime altitude above such problems as those which involve the salvation, the liberty, the education, the bread of the millions, these favorite sons of literary fortune dwell in an atmosphere of rarefied selfishness, from which comes down now and then a sneer at the boorishness, or a fling at the fanaticism, of those who are humbly striving to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and save the lost."

I shall be glad if in mental pursuits you attain the success and find the joy others have found; but beware of selfish enjoyment, lest you defeat the noblest purposes of education—your enlarged faculty for glorifying God, and helping humanity.

Another legitimate object of mental culture is *adornment*. Remember the beautiful prayer of the Psalmist—"that our daughters may be as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace."

We train the tree, the flower; we carve the column, and paint the canvas; we dress ourselves and our children with taste. Why shall we not embellish the person, the character, the life of our daughters, with such beauty and grace as intellectual culture can furnish?

Other things being equal, education for refinement, for attractive grace in the home, and in society, is not wrong. It is proper, it gives to life the cheer of a gracious melody. But this is far from the highest and noblest purpose of education. Adornment should be a result, rather than a purpose of culture. When mere finish is definitely aimed at, then this result of culture is abused, and there is a pitiable waste of every outlay imposed. This is the mistake foolish mothers sometimes make with their daughters. Fortune perhaps lifts them above the necessity of toil, and forgetting that there are other and higher aims of useful labor than a mere livelihood, they educate their daughters solely with a view to accomplishments, and the flip-pant demands of society.

Such young women are educated for show and display, and not for high duty, nor with a view to any responsibility that gives dignity to a human life. Such contemplate in the years before them no useful work; it is meant that the jewelled hand of wealth shall be offered after awhile; meanwhile the theatre, the opera, and the whirl of society shall be set with their delicate graces, and when the rich man's son has been taken in the snare, these delicate plants will be good only to grace the drawing-room, or as Mr. Newton wittily puts it, shall be like their sisters of the field, which "toil not, neither do they spin."

Remember, my young friends, that true education is character building, it is the enlargement and best appropriation of life. In such an achievement beauty and adornment will not be wanting, nor will they be first in the thought and purpose of a true woman.

When a man sets about to build a house, he does not begin with the painter and gilder. Neither may you begin with decoration, if you would put permanence and immortality into your life-fabric and life-work. While, then, enjoyment and adornment are proper aims both in the methods and objects of culture, they are still subordinate to the higher and more inclusive aim of *utility*.

The truest and noblest purpose of mental culture is usefulness. If, with this, we can have pleasure and embellishment, it is well; but without this latter, the two former may only be a mockery or a snare. The education of women is defective in just so far as it fails

to fit them for the useful aims and high responsibilities that God has laid upon the threshold of every human life. There is great weakness here in much of the female culture of the times. It is more fanciful than real, more decorative than useful. She is best educated, school or no school, medal or no medal, classic title or not, who with such faculties as God has given her, industriously improved and wisely applied, is best filling her noble mission in life; for education is pre-eminently a thing of usefulness, and not of show, nor of selfish indulgence. Dr. Phelps very evidently describes that fashionable culture which obtains in some quarters to-day, in these words: "The highest homœopathic trituration of the educational ideal is that of a modern French boarding-school for young ladies. It is worthy of the nugiferous gentledame, whom the Simple Cobbler of Agawam describes as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher, and the epitome of nothing."

Such fancy culture will avail you nothing. The culture you need is the culture that will ennoble and strengthen every force and faculty. There is nothing worthy of your doing, my young friends, that will not be made easier and more pleasurable by proper education. Whether daughter, wife, or mother, woman is immensely advantaged by the largest possible development of her intellectual faculties. There is not a household care that is not made lighter, not a vocation to which choice or necessity may call woman, that will not be more easily and more proficiently filled by the

proper culture and healthy growth of mind. Such a woman will turn from physical or other toil, to find rest and recuperation among her books, and in such pursuits as challenge her intellectual faculties; and so she will freshen and replenish the springs of life, and the tides of the great sea of knowledge will come up and "pulse through her soul their rhythmic calm." Only see to it that your knowledge serve you, for those acquirements which master rather than minister to the high and noble purposes of a human being are the waste and reproach of the noble faculties they have fettered. This is a practical age, and women no less than men, if they wish to take place among the cultured, must be willing to have the scope and value of their knowledge estimated by the common standard of what they are able to do.

But excellent and necessary as physical and intellectual culture are, there is still a higher purpose in all true education. It is the development of our nobler moral and spiritual faculties. There is no substitute for this highest of all human endowments, and happily no hindrance to the attainment that may not be removed with our own consent. Your physical vigor may be limited, your intellectual faculties spare, and your advantages few; but most ample arrangement has been made for the development and consecration of all that is truest and noblest in womanhood.

It is your fault, and your awful sin, if the mightiest and noblest forces in your souls are not regenerated and active in the noblest purposes of human life.

Christian culture gives wise direction to the outlay of physical force, appoints a worthy aim to intellectual acquisitions and pursuits, and exercises a sovereignty over human life which makes it princely in its achievements, and immortal in destiny. The neglect of the moral by those who educate, whether they be parents, teachers, or whoever, reveals a lack of wisdom that condemns rather than commends those who make intellectual or scholarly pretensions. He is not a competent gardener who gives all his skill and attention to the fence about the enclosure, and allows vegetable and flower to take care of themselves. One of the evils of our time is the great number of people who are ill-proportioned in their development. They are large in the head, and dwarfs in the heart. They talk learnedly and glibly sometimes about progress and science and literature. They do not represent the noblest type of manhood or womanhood. They are educated failures. The noblest, most masterly faculties of their souls all lie dead under the splendid burden of their culture. Train your intellect only, be indifferent to your moral nature and character, while you aim at proficiency in art, in science, in manners, in general literature, and you have done little else than plant flowers on a ghastly tomb, and mankind will not be better, but worse, for your culture. Newton was great when in the majesty of his intellect he traversed the radiant sky, but he was greater when on his knees he humbly adored the God who set the stars in their courses. Mrs Browning was great when she struck from her

lyre thoughts that thrill in the best inspirations of the ages, but greater still when she turned aside to commune with God. The highest standard of knowledge, remember, is not intellectual, but spiritual. Your intellectual faculties may give you prominence and sway, but nothing can clothe them with such majesty and power as the grace of God. "Education may give them feet, but religion will give them wings; and if, for a time, religion seems to abash and humble the mind, it is that afterwards it may give it a wider charter, and stir it by a mightier impulse." The harm wrought by a godless education is incalculable. There is a peril in all knowledge that scorns Christian principle and faith, that sneers at the Christian revelation, that has no god but law, while in every sense it is itself lawless; that menaces the State, despises the Church, and labors to plant in the very heart of civilization the seeds of infidelity and revolution. I see it stated that the Nihilists of Russia are made up chiefly of students from both sexes.

If parents are wise, they will not be concerned first about the social and intellectual standard of the schools to which they commit their daughters, but about their moral character. No school is competent to educate the sons or daughters of this land, which is not avowedly the friend and supporter of the Bible and the Christian religion. Whenever a school dependent upon public patronage, becomes known only for its excellent discipline, its thorough instruction, its adequate facilities, but is purposely innocent of any pronounced

views on highest morality and religion, then the most sacred interests of our homes, and of our civilization, demand that the sympathy and support of all right-minded people be turned away from it. Happily there are but few such in this land of ours, whose proudest boast and noblest distinction in no small part are her Christian schools.

I have purposely wandered.

To return, I cannot tell you, my dear young friends, how solemnly important it is that you should give all diligence to renew and develop, by God's grace and Spirit, those great moral faculties with which He has so highly endowed you, and that you bring whatever intellectual gifts and acquirements you possess to Him, that He may touch them with a holy consecration. To know God and Jesus Christ, this is eternal life, and this is the highest standard of knowledge. Have you learned of Him who is meek and lowly in heart? Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ, and in response to this question falling from His own lip, are you following Him? Only thus may you attain to the true end of education, only thus hope to realize the magnificent possibilities God has enshrined in your wondrous being and life. This is the wisdom, this the understanding you will be happy to include in all your acquisitions—

“For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length

of days is in her right hand ; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her ; and happy is every one that retaineth her." Prov. iii. 14-18.

Thus in your character and life will response be given in all your strengthfulness and beauty, in society, in the home, in the Church, to the Psalmist's beautiful prayer—" *That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.*" Ps. cxliv. 12.



CHAPTER X.

FAULTS AND PERILS.

“ Brunetta’s wise in actions great and rare,
But scorns on trifles to bestow her care ;
Thus every hour Brunetta is to blame,
Because th’ occasion is beneath her aim :
Think naught a trifle, though it small appear ;
Small sands the mountains, moments make the year ;
And trifles life. Your care to trifles give,
Or you may die before you truly live.”— *Young*.

If you were about to set out upon a voyage to a foreign country, you would make suitable preparation for a journey involving so much. Every necessity looking to your health, comfort, and safety, would be carefully considered and amply provided for. The wisdom of such a course the most thoughtless will not question. Already you have started upon the far more important, and far more perilous, voyage of life.

With a larger experience, I may be allowed to make some suggestions respecting your outfit. To happy youth, so often taken with the fanciful, there are no breakers ahead; they set out gayly, content that a calm sea greets their gaze at the beginning. They can scarce believe it when the sun-browned and storm-beaten mariner smiles at their dainty boat, and as they push away with a cheer, solemnly says—

“ Sure a time will come
For storms to try thee, and strong blast to rend
Thy painted sails, and spread thy gold-like chaff
O'er the wild waves; and what a wreck—
If judgment find thee unsustain'd by God ! ”

Faults and perils in the formation of character, and in the progress of life, are as rocks in the sea to the laden ship. Covered up, or deceptive in their pretense, they receive the vessel with a shock, and when they do not send it shattered to the bottom, they disable it for the remainder of the way. The voyage from that moment is a venture without promise. I desire to drop a buoy or two, that if possible you may escape the perils of the way, and come to the fair haven in safety. The evil besetments of human life are many, so insidious, and withal so successful, that you who are young especially, will do well to heed any voice that is lifted to expose, or to clasp any hand extended to lead you away from danger.

You could be guilty of no greater folly than dullness to any evil within, or peril without, that may endanger your way. “ The simple believeth every word; but the prudent man looketh well to his going.” “ A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.”

You have a character to establish and develop. It will constitute the capital of your life, and as it is good or bad will be your glory or your shame. Proper character is the sum of all excellence, and the source of all worthy immortality. Without character, life is worse than a blank—it is a blot, a waste, a calamity.

Character is not a sublime legacy—a finished and beautiful possession which we inherit; but it is a conscious personal growth, made up of many and seemingly small elements. It is not one whole piece, without joint or seam; but a mosaic, wrought into wholeness and symmetry by patient endeavor, and brave mastery of evil assault.

Building character is really delicate work. Conceive the patient skill, the clear vision, and the lofty reach, of a human being who, in herself, would attempt to carve out an image of God. A shade of thought, a tinge of hasty temper, one step too far in a forbidden path, may spoil it all, and spoil it forever. It is the small worm that stings the plant and wastes its beauty. So in character, small things make it or destroy it.

A friend passing by entered the studio of Angelo when he was finishing a statue. He looked at the piece, and said to the master: "Have you been idle since I saw you last?" "By no means," replied the sculptor, "I have retouched this part, and polished that; I have softened this feature, and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip, and more energy to this limb." "Well, well," said the visitor, "all these are trifles." "It may be so," responded Angelo; "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle."

In the formation and growth of your character it is of greatest importance, both as it may involve the evils that imperil, and the excellences that adorn, that you look well to what some are wont to call trifles.

The mighty avalanche is formed of stars of crystal, of flakes of snow, which a sunbeam's point might melt, or the breath of a summer zephyr might bear away, but in its completeness there is a fearful mastery in it. So, little faults may become a tyrant to rule, or a monster to destroy. And so, too, the smallest excellencies may round into a fabric of beauty good enough to enshrine the image of God.

Of bits of virtue mingled with tints of grace, of thoughts of purity and deeds of kindness and love, quickened with impulse of reverence and duty, of silent purposes thrilled with self-denial and matured by quiet triumphs, it is thus, as the deep stream flows on, that human character is well laid, and girded for the noblest achievements and rewards of life. It may be without any deep moving consciousness of it, you are all going forward at this moment, in the formation of some sort of character. There is no arrest in growth for better or worse. The importance of setting a keen vigilance in youth upon every fault, and of giving a prompt acceptance to every least virtue, cannot be over-estimated. Now is the time to master what menaces, and as well to adopt and cultivate what promises.

You can do either now with comparative ease; but if you defer, your arm will prove too short after while to reach up to the good and beautiful on the one hand, and too weak on the other to rend the chain that binds you. When the avalanche is piled and has once set out on its thundering way, who can stay its sweep or avert its desolation?

It will be well to remember what sort of after inspiration is to spring from the memory of your course now. There is a wonderful accumulation in good or ill, for good or ill, in the time to come. "There is no fault nor folly of my life," says Ruskin, "that does not rise up against me, and take away my joy, and shorten my power of possession, of sight, of understanding. And every past effort of my life, every gleam of rightness or good in it, is with me now, to help me in my grasp of this art and its vision." It is for you to say what sort of a moral brood you will generate and carry down with you, and whether the memory of your course shall commend or condemn you. Most sure it is that the basis of character you now adopt will effect, if it does not permanently determine, your after destiny, and your life will be worthy or worthless in harmony with your choice.

But it will not be sufficient that faults be exposed, and that perils be pointed out, nor yet that the mastery and beauty of noble character be commended; you must resolve to meet and conquer the one, and own and attain to the other. On either side the most vigorous effort of the will is challenged. We never overcome the least evil, nor attain to the least virtue, without the conscious exercise of the personal will. With the very much there is within as well as without to resist all best forces, what need for that resolution of soul which is at once an inspiration to good endeavor, and an assurance of success! The untiring energy of the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, was only

surpassed by the invention and skill of her genius; and had she pursued the good with the one-half of the determination and zeal with which she wrought in evil, she would have become as famed for a noble and beautiful character, as she is still known for extraordinary endowments and splendid crimes. It was her set purpose, more than her genius, that made her what she was.

So, no matter what gifts you may possess, no matter what disposition to excellence you may inherit, no matter what advantages are placed to your hand, you will only be successful in achieving a noble character by making it a high purpose of the soul.

Energy, determination, is itself strength; if girded by God, evil may assail and wrestle with it, but it is sure to win. Your will on the right side, and it becomes the pulsing soul of your character, and the strength and majesty of your going become an inspiration to those about you, and a spectacle to the angels.

“Oh, well for her whose will is strong!

But ill for her who, bettering 'not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended will,
And ever weaker grows through acted crime.”

To all this great work, so eminently worthy of your best powers, the faults you may indulge and the perils that may beset your way stand in very serious relation. I shall be glad, if I may be able to place such of them before you as the limits of one chapter will allow, and with such emphasis as will lift you above, and give you mastery over them.

The few I shall be able to present, may be considered representative of a large number, and may be included under the general term of *Society*.

The social life of to-day, especially in our cities, is far from faultless, and in its pretensions and demands furnishes one of the first perils which young women encounter. A lady a short time ago, writing to a New England clergyman, and speaking from a knowledge which may not be gainsaid, says: "It is in the claims of society upon our girls that their strength is most severely taxed. To meet creditably the demands of this master, our girls must attend dancing school, go to parties, concerts, the theatre, sociables; be active members of cooking clubs, reading clubs, archery clubs; ride, skate, walk, and go to the health-lift. To do this, and to dress with appropriate anxiety for each one of these occasions, a young girl runs an appalling gauntlet of foes to the healthy development of both soul and body." It is not meant that all of these requirements are evil; in themselves, they are not; but they are among the things not only adopted, but perverted, by society. Society, by its fashions and follies, employs them as means of proud display and harmful excess. It is rare that any young lady given up to the demands of social-life, as now constituted among the so-called better classes, escapes serious injury to both her moral and physical being. The great wrong, as well as the great snare of fashionable society, is that it regards with such indifference the good and useful. It is as faulty in its aim as it is superficial in its pretensions.

Its appeal is not to the nobler, but to the lower faculties of woman's nature, that part of her being which already has sway, and instead of a larger cultivation needs to be restrained and brought under the mastery of the higher.

Society in its most pretentious form, certainly in its excesses, does not call for the higher and nobler elements of womanhood—these are not conditions of its privileges; and for those Christian graces which constitute the best life and ornament of woman, it has not so much as a partial toleration. Its clamor is for show, for vanity, and for the wild dash of those fashions and tempers which, like worthless weeds, grow unbidden, and steal the strength that should give vigor and beauty to a better growth. Very often it is not more the master of the daughter than of the mother, who is responsible in many cases for the frivolous life, and the sorry end which society has brought to her child. Her foolish, selfish pride, has been gratified in the preference and empty applause which her daughter has received; but more than once it has been at vastly greater cost than the large expenditure of money it required.

If it did not involve so much that is really serious, it would be amusing to observe how the event of entering society has assumed almost the dignity of a profession with some. Mothers set about it in a systematic manner: the preliminaries complied with, the edict goes forth; caught up on the wings of the press, it is borne far and near, and there is a buzz and flutter

in fashionable circles, as with large expenditure, and great show and pomp, the young miss, fresh from boarding-school, and literally covered with accomplishments, makes her debut, and is the idol of the guild for the time; and all this is done with a method, an expense, and a deliberation that would seem to indicate that the best life and hope of the favored daughter depended upon it.

Now she is ready—well, for what? Can you tell me where the really good, useful and beautiful are arranged for, or are meant to be? What a mocking sham it is, and to what bitter dust it all comes in the end!

Remember, it is not true social worth and enjoyment I condemn, but it is that tawdry, self-indulgent, wasteful, and pretentious thing known as fashionable society—that kind of life which consists of pompous parade and unwomanly indulgence, and neither contributes to nor conserves any interest of womanhood.

I bid you beware of it, and beware of it in time, for if once taken in its toils you will find that if its fetters have on them the glitter of gold, they also have in them the strength of steel. You will look in vain for help and blessing in the higher spheres of life among women who have become the victims or the idols of society. Such a life more than once has not only destroyed the individual, but pauperized a nation.

We little imagine the mighty influence for evil this class has upon the best work of the nation or the Church. With large wealth and position often at their command, there is no estimating what harm such

people do. Heber Newton says with much force—"In vain, O women, shall the pulpit teach seriousness of aim in life, if society preaches frivolity and idle pleasure-seeking; in vain shall the church urge the unselfish service of humanity, if the world puts forth as fashion-plates for the approved style of the gentleman and the lady, the idle, self-indulgent drone."

In your life-aim I would not deprive you of a single innocent enjoyment; but by the nobility of your being, by the vast possibilities of your life, by the many and promising opportunities that crowd about you, by the memory you are to leave behind you, and all in one by your obligation to the God who made and loves you, I charge you, shun the superficial, the wasteful, the unwomanly, and seek the permanent, the true and the good, and success will crown your life, and joy will sing in your soul.

But with this general statement, I wish yet to bring to your attention some of the special evils of society. Prominent among these are the follies of fashion, and the bondage and improprieties of dress.

I make no indiscriminate assault on fashion and dress. Dress is a necessary convenience, and a particular fashion may greatly enhance the beauty and comfort of one's apparel. There is no virtue in dressing in bad taste for the sake of plainness, when at the same cost propriety and beauty may be respected. It is the slavery of dress and the snobbish demands of society respecting it, against which I counsel you. When fashion and dress become the masters instead of the

servants of men or women, then the nobility of manhood or womanhood is not held in very high esteem, and the beautiful in character and the useful in life are counted trifles. A woman paying homage at so low a shrine presents a spectacle at once degrading and pitiable. It is doubtless true that when you have seen the clothes some young men wear, you have seen the most there is of them; but I incline to believe that the peril of only taking thought for raiment, is one that endangers young women more than young men. This is not because as a rule the better elements of nature are found in larger degree in men than in women, but because dress is essentially more to a woman than to a man. Aside from propriety and comfort, woman has more charms of face and form upon which taste may be displayed than men possess.

A traveller says—"I have observed among all nations, the women ornament themselves more than the men." There can be no objection to a woman dressing richly and with comeliness, if she can afford it; but when a woman forgets that true character is not a thing of fabrics, of fashion-plates, of buttons and jewels, and cultivates such a passion for dress as to have no shrine but the toilet, and no heaven but her wardrobe; when her loftiest ambitions, her keenest envy, and her best affections, are all inwoven with the clothes she wears; when she thinks, and dreams, and plans most about the dress and adornment of her poor dying body; when she comes to be known more by the costliness, and quantity, and style of her raiment

than by any mental attainment, or moral excellence; when her self-indulgence in these matters becomes a boast and a luxury, while her self-denial for the happiness and good of others is a trifle, the spectacle is pitiable indeed, and should kindle a blush on the cheek of every victim of so degrading a bondage. No character can be worthy, no life noble, where the most stirring purpose of the soul is brought down to such a level. It is a small matter with such whether they stand approved at the bar of conscience and before God, if pride is gratified and the external person appears gay and attractive to others. It was the shrewd remark of Franklin that, "the eyes of other people, rather than our own, lead us into half the expenditures we make." How certainly true this is of many a foolish votary of dress and fashion.

Some one has said—"There is a philosophy in clothes." In some part at least dress is a standard, or an interpretation of character. If we may know a sloven by the uncomeliness of her dress, may we not by the same test sometimes detect a fop or a flirt? Think of a woman so devoted to fashion, to pride and dress, as to be absorbed to the degree of mastery with them, to go into company, on the street, into the very house of God, for the display of her finery. What a reproach is not such low servitude upon the noble nature and the equally noble mission God has appointed to woman! Is not this sowing to the wind, and how can the end be other than disastrous?

"The fashion of the world passeth away," and with

the vanishing vision, the fanciful life of the victim of fashion perishes. A time comes when such dissipation leaves its mark, beauty fades, and refuses any more to respond to the blandishments of art, and the very society that once found an idol in the victim, now turns away with disgust. She reaps what she has sown; she has lived "for the display of dry goods, and the possibilities of millinery and mantua-making;" and no longer equal to the demands of fashion, she is flung aside as worthless rubbish is tossed to the debris.

Some one has well described the forlorn fate of such a woman in these words: "No one is more unhappy than an ex-belle. To what expedient does she not resort to prolong her reign, or, at least, to make it believed that she has not gone by? And when she does vanish like a falling star, and there is no trace of her glittering path, vanity still remains, but only to torment her. It drives her into the slough of envy, or into the quicksands of lassitude.* It degenerates into hypochondriasis, or vents itself in ill-humor."

You do not covet such a fate, I am sure, Beware then, lest by the delusion of show, the tyranny of pride, and the seductive spell of gayety and frivolity, you come sooner than you dream to a condition at once so dishonoring and helpless. Pay becoming respect to beauty, cultivate good taste in your adornment as well as in your deportment, do honor to every charm of face and form God has given you, dress with modesty and attractiveness; but give first and largest place to the higher and more enduring virtues which

light up the face with divinest beauty, and clothe the body with noblest grace.

Of the model woman, it is said: "Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come." Among those who have no passion for dress, and no place in fashionable society, God has many a gem whose pure lustre is unmatched among those whose slavish pride is their wardrobe, and whose daily life is like the insect dancing on the wave, and radiant in the vanishing sunbeam.

"'Tis the mind that makes the body rich,
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honor peereth in the meanest habit."

Aim to have your mental attainments, your virtues and graces, your life of beauty and goodness, commend you, rather than the comeliness of your form, or the dress of your person. She never dies, never wants for beauty and grace, never fails to challenge admiration, whose adorning consists not "of plaiting the hair, of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but of the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Another fault peculiar to fashionable society, and by which the young women of our time are imperiled, is *Novel Reading*. I will not detain to discuss the question as to whether young women are more addicted to this fault than young men, or whether the peril is greater in one case than in the other. It is enough to

know that novels are read, and sometimes indiscriminately read, by multitudes of young women, and that not a few are rendered almost, if not entirely, useless by the practice. It is quite possible, I think, that those very elements in woman's nature which are meant to ennoble her, render her more susceptible to the snare of this evil than young men. The appeal of an unwholesome novel is insidious as the approach of a viper, and often its poison is quickened in the bosom which it makes its victim.

This question assumes serious proportions when we remember that this is a reading age—an age of books; and the variety is not only commensurate with the demand of the masses, but also with their moral purpose and taste. There never was so general and forcible an appeal, and never such a universal response to the reading faculty; and hence there never was so much need for caution, especially among the young.

We see to it that the children shall not eat indiscriminately nor intemperately of what is set before them; and so in the vast quantity of reading matter now thrust upon our attention, it is wise and necessary both for moral and economic reasons to discriminate. I do not condemn the reading of fiction indiscriminately. That would in some part at least defeat the very purpose at which I aim.

The novel is the one form of literature which is sought and read by all classes. Philosophy, history, poetry, science, theology—these are read chiefly by the student and the professional classes; but young

and old, good and bad, the world over, read the novel. The novel is social; it deals with human life, in which every one is more or less interested; it has charms of style which, inwoven with good or evil, make it attractive; it presents either the beauty or baseness of character, and so discloses the winning or repulsive elements of human nature as to challenge attention and sympathy.

Nothing in literature to-day has the mastery over so many minds as the novel. Here the masses come for history, poetry, philosophy, and theology as well. The novel to-day is made the instrument of reform as never before. If a great wrong is to be exposed, if the pretense and sham of social life are to be held up to just ridicule, if the hard selfishness, the avarice, the deception of human nature is to be unmasked, and on the other hand if the sweet, tender, and beautiful are to be set out in sublime lustre and hallowed fragrance, they are caught up by the imagination and pen of the novelist, and made to burn on the tempting page. The very wide mission accorded to this style of writing, and the unquestionable influence it exerts upon human character and life, give very serious emphasis to the necessity of careful selection.

There are novels that are base, unclean, leprous, and are as unfit for the touch of a respectable young woman, as the jeweled hand of a libertine. When a young man, or a young woman, must turn aside to read, and then hide from the approach of purity the book in hand, because of the soil and stench of its

contents, they have fallen to a debasement equal to the foul taint of the mind and pen which provide the feast on which they feed.

It is sometimes claimed that such productions are true to life, sprightly and bright. "Yes," as one puts it well, "brilliant as a rotten log, or a putrescent carcass, which shine because they are decayed, and are phosphorescent just in proportion as they are offensive." But of course with this class of novels you will have nothing to do, and I will hurry away lest the very thought of them leaves some taint of their nastiness.

There is another class of novels which, though less base in conception, are equally worthless with those I have described. They are vapid, silly, overwrought, unhealthy, and good for nothing. They are written and published with one end in view—namely to sell; and sell they do, by the million they sell, and constitute the sole reading of thousands, among them mothers not a few, and of daughters a great army. The reading of such senseless trash is a sinful waste of time, and a reproach upon the character and intelligence of any woman.

There is yet another class of novels, more healthful in tone and purpose; they are illustrations of truth often when they are not statements of actual facts; they promote virtue when they do not wrestle with particular vices; they give impulse to the best elements of manhood and womanhood often when they do not purposely aim at spiritual renewal, and the reading of

them may be as instructive as it is entertaining. But the lament is that the purer, the more instructive and elevating, the more fiction has approached to the holy and the real, the less it is desired by the young, and the less it is read. Is it not true that the purest and most intellectual novels are not the most popular? Ruskin, in speaking of the better class of fiction, says—"Well read, indeed, these books have serious use, being nothing less than treatises on moral anatomy and chemistry; studies of human nature in the elements of it. But I attach little weight to this function; they are hardly ever read with earnestness enough to permit them to fulfill it." It is that empty, and to a healthy mind nauseating class of novels upon which hundreds and thousands of young women spend their days and nights, not excepting the holy Sabbath, a style of reading which is not cheaper in price than it is in substance, against which I utter protest.

Reading is but an invisible form of example and influence, that is not less real in its effects than the visible transactions of life, or the conscious results of character. It will be to the mind, heart and life, what conditions of atmosphere and habit are to the moral and physical being. Our reading must help to make or unmake us. We shall not only be influenced by its contents as they pertain to the subject, but as well by the character of the author; for men and women do interweave their individuality with what they write, and we sometimes are in greater danger of absorbing their prejudices than we are desirous to apprehend the truth.

We should be quite as ready to test the mental and moral impression of what we read upon us, as we are wont to be charmed with the conception and style of the story. The reading of a man or a woman may generally be taken as an interpretation of character, and as some measurement of mind; and that which discovers the taste and temper of the moral life, and the narrowness or compass of mind, will be sure to give cultivation in these respects. That books do establish habit, give shape to character, and worth or worthlessness to life, is certainly true. Many a boy has kindled the passion that made the man an outlaw, a murderer, and a despiser of God, with the contents of the books he has read. Many a girl has been fitted for the silly and sullied venture of romance, and so thrust into the clutch of her destroyer by the exciting story of the yellow cover she has devoured with such shameful greed.

Set your minds to work, and see if you can recall a single woman who, with the devotion of passion, has given much of her time to the reading of morbid, overwrought and sensational novels, who is noted for anything good, and who, on the other hand, is not known for indolence, ignorance, frivolty, and vanity.

It is worth while to discard corrupt and empty reading for its evil effects upon the mind. It puts no tax upon any faculty; innocent of brains in the writing, it requires none in the reading, and hence so many silly girls waste time on such trash, and sometimes, I blush to say it, even mothers stoop, not to a fountain of

living water, but to this stagnant and foam-covered pool. To what mind there is in such a case, such reading is enervating; it reduces the mental constitution to a condition of "general flabbiness, vitiates the taste, and leaves a disrelish for sound and true mental food; while the more pernicious portion subtly taints the spirit with sensationalism of emotion and pruriency of imagination."

But it is the moral degeneracy such reading occasions that is most to be deplored. Like gambling in men, novel-reading in women is one of the most serious and formidable obstacles in the way of the approach and influence of any sacred ministry. The imagination is corrupted, the moral sense is blunted, restraints of propriety are thrown off; in short, the animal nature, like a vicious steed, fretted and harnessed, rushes away from all overture of virtue and religion. I know no temptation common to your sex which does not imperil the woman who has cultivated a passion for low or trashy novels. Some rule to guide you in the selection of what you should read, will be well. I know no better than this of Robert Southey: "Would you know whether the tendency of a book is good or evil, examine in what state of mind you lay it down. Has it induced you to suspect that that which you have been accustomed to think unlawful may after all be innocent, and that that may be harmless which you hitherto have been taught to think dangerous? Has it tended to make you dissatisfied and impatient under the control of others, and disposed you to relax in that

self-government without which both the laws of God and man tell us there can be no virtue, and consequently no happiness? Has it attempted to abate your admiration and reverence for what is great and good, and to diminish in you the love of your country and your fellow-creatures? Has it addressed itself to your pride, your vanity, your selfishness, or any other of your evil propensities? Has it defiled the imagination with what is loathsome, and shocked the heart with what is monstrous? Has it disturbed the sense of right and wrong which the Creator has implanted in the human soul? If so—if you are conscious of all or of any of these effects—or if, having escaped from all, you have felt that such were the effects it was intended to produce—throw the book into the fire, young man, though it should have been the gift of a friend! Young lady, away with the whole set, though it should be the prominent furniture of a rosewood book-case.”

These rules allow a wholesome liberty, they deprive you of nothing fit for any woman to read, and who follows them will not mistake. Such counsel cannot be looked upon as presumptuous or arbitrary. It is the appeal of wisdom, of purity, and of kindness. Returning to Ruskin again, he says: “The sense, to a healthy mind, of being strengthened and enervated by reading, is just as definite and unmistakable as the sense, to a healthy body, of being in fresh or foul air: and no more arrogance is involved in forbidding the reading of an unwholesome book, than in a physician’s ordering the windows to be opened in a sick-room!”

I unhesitatingly and frankly warn you against all corrupt and frivolous reading. It is unworthy your womanhood; life is too short, and its quiet hours are too sacred and few, to waste them in reading valueless books. Read what will instruct as well as please; what will crystallize into character and noble deeds, as well as inspire; what will come to you as an after memory to refresh, or an angel to comfort; and with all your reading give conscientious and loving attention to the best of books—the Bible. You never heard of a young woman being corrupted, or led astray, or rendered vicious in character and useless in life, by the careful and constant reading and study of the Holy Scriptures. To the unsullied and radiant pages of God's Word I commend you.

“Dig deep into this precious mine,
Toil, and its richest ore is thine :
Search, and the Lord will lend His aid
To strew its wealth from its mystic shade ;
Strive, and His Spirit will give thee light
To work in the heavenly mine aright.
Pray without ceasing, and in Him confide,
Into all truth His light will guide.”

Besides these more manifest evils, there are certain lesser improprieties, against which I venture a word of kindly admonition in closing this chapter. They are often the result of thoughtlessness rather than of evil intent; but they are none the less damaging to womanly character, and even more to be guarded against on this account.

There is a proper bearing, a becoming modesty, a

prudence of utterance, a condition of temper, that belongs to the beauty and charm of true womanhood, which she cannot afford to treat with indifference.

The more delicate, the more highly polished a jewel is, the easier is it tarnished, and the greater the care required in handling it. Without giving favor to stiffness, or any affected restraint, it is still true that there is something as sacred as it is beautiful in the comely deportment of young women. It takes a life-time to build a character; you can destroy it by the one mistake that only required a moment.

That you should be happy, is as becoming as it is for flowers to look fresh in the morning, or for the birds to fill the air with their carols. But you can be happy and agreeable without being forward, immodest, or wild. The impression you make upon others should be pure, elevating, a testimony to your worth, and to your character and life a crown of excellence. Delicacy and true refinement, once lost, are never easily recovered. Genius and art combined cannot restore the tint to the faded flower.

To be a lady is a first and high duty. Good breeding is virtue, grace and intelligence, all in one. Rudeness in a woman is immorality. Gail Hamilton says: "To be a lady is more than to be a prince. A lady is always in her own right inalienably worthy of respect. To a lady, prince or peasant alike bow. Do not be restrained. Do not have impulses that need restraint. * * * Carry yourself so loftily that men will look up to you for reward—not at you in rebuke. The natural

sentiment of man toward woman is reverence. He loses a large means of grace when he is obliged to account her a being to be trained in propriety. A man's ideal is not wounded when a woman fails in worldly wisdom; but if in grace, in tact, in sentiment, in delicacy, in kindness, she should be found wanting, he receives an inward hurt."

"The world is wide, these things are small;
They may be nothing, but they are all."

You will not forget that while the fault of idle gossip is not peculiar to women alone, still the tongue is an unruly member, and when once drilled to rash and trifling speech, it is not easily tamed. A companion or help-meet, often of hasty temper, it is no ordinary fault when a young woman, or any woman, is given to tattling.

A vast amount of envy, pride, and selfishness are often crowded into harsh criticisms of others, and in any event the pitiable occupation of peddling the mistakes and faults of others about in the community is so entirely unbecoming the true lady that I am sure I need but mention it to awaken your scorn of it. "All great talkers of little talk are dangerous, not because of their power, but because of their weakness." Of the virtuous woman, Solomon says: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

"Nay, speak no ill; a kindly word
Can never leave a sting behind;
And, oh, to breathe each tale we've heard
Is far beneath a noble mind."

Finally, beware of a presumptuous confidence. The mistake I intimate in this caution is the more dangerous, because there is so seldom any conscious guard about it. Temptation is alert for advantage, and how often it wins by the perversion or imprudent toleration of the best faculties. How often, even those who love purity, and in the calm reflective moment would scorn any reproach of it, have been fatally ensnared by a confidence that presumed too far. When the affections are kindled and set upon another, there is the greatest necessity for womanly propriety; but, just then, there is sometimes a toleration which has more than once left its scar for life. Some things we must learn by experience; but when the experience is at the sacrifice of character, the lesson is too dearly bought.

What with the indelicacy and liberty of the dance, the evil suggestions of novels, and sometimes the blushless indecencies of the theatre, along with the hurtful license of fashionable society, the white purity of young women is, to say the least, put to a fearful test. If I cannot turn you away from all these delusive charmers, I may warn you of their danger.

Woman is curious, woman is imaginative, woman is masterly in affection. Evil in its coarse, rude form you abhor, but how is it when concealed under the pretense of devotion; or clad in the drapery, or buttressed about by the customs of fashion? Often what is stoutly condemned among the vicious and the ignorant, is countenanced, if not indulged, among the

gay and proud. It matters little where, or in what dress, you gaze upon the monster, if it is imprinting its image on your soul. It was with a kiss Judas betrayed his Lord. The pretense of love and its pulsing heart are often far apart. This world furnishes no calamities of life so profound and moving in their pity, and so sad in their consequences, as those enshrined in woman's love and woe. Her noblest faculty proves her fatal snare when she loves to self-abandonment, and then, when she has laid all upon the altar, she is cowardly and cruelly flung aside:—

“Like the wreck left to drift amidst the roar
Of the great ocean with the rocky shore.”

The fault may not be half her own, but so sacred a thing is woman's honor, that she must live and die under more than half its curse.

The loss of innocence is fatal. O, the wail of the soul that wakes up to the consciousness of that loss!

“O, that I had my innocence again!
My untouched honor. But I wish in vain.
The fleece that has been by the dyer stained
Never again its native whiteness gain'd.”

Remember, my dear young friends, that the noblest affections of your nature may, but never should, overreach the distinct limits of propriety and righteousness. Plant God's law at the gates of the citadel that holds your honor. The unbidden hand that turns that veil aside, though it is full of treasure, and glitters with jewels, lets in no light, but darkens the soul with a dripping shadow.

The counsel the apostle gave to Timothy is most applicable to you, in view of these perils, and will constitute at once your safeguard and royal dignity—"Keep thyself pure." Look well to your character, lay its foundation strong and broad with principles of truth, and model the superstructure after Him who is Himself the truth, manifest in the sublime perfections that give beauty and mastery to womanhood.

The security and glory of woman's character are to be found in a culture that gets its impulse from Christ, and rounds her soul into His spotless image. Only with such a compass as the Bible, such a captain as Christ, and such a pilot as the Holy Ghost, can I venture to bid you God-speed, as you sail away in the voyage of life; and with these, I yet beg the privilege of putting this cluster of gems about your neck—"Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

"Give thy mind sea-room, keep it wide of earth,
That rock of souls immortal; let loose thy cord;
Weigh anchor; spread thy sails, call every wind;
Eye thy great Pole-star; make the land of life."

CHAPTER XI.

MATRIMONY.

"O fortunate, O happy day,
When a new household finds its place
Among the myriad homes of earth,
Like a new star just sprung to birth
And rolled on its harmonious way
Into the boundless realms of space."—*Longfellow.*

God, the best maker of all marriages,
Combine your hearts in one, your realms in one."—*Shakespeare.*

"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh."—*Jesus Christ.*

It is possible, my young friends, that the subject of this chapter may seem to you the most fanciful of any in this volume. The announcement has perhaps excited your interest as would a romantic tale, and you have come to the reading of it to make response, it may be, to your curiosity or to your amusement, rather than to any desire for instruction, or help in fulfilling a high and holy obligation.

The general conversation of men and women on the theme of our present discourse is lamentably below the high standard God has given to marriage, and too often indicates the thoughtless manner in which many pass its sacred portals.

The young will bear upon the countenance a solemn mien as they follow a loved friend to the grave, but with what rashness and positive irreverence many rush into the sanctities and obligations of marriage, an event of such possibilities as that death has more than once been the longed-for relief from the penalty of its haste.

If any such disposition possess you, I would arrest you at the very beginning, and if possible kindle in you a temper of mind and heart more worthy a subject involving the most solemn issues of your life.

Believe me, we have not come to look at an insect dancing on the ripples of a lake, nor to gaze upon any fairy vision of an excited fancy, but to contemplate one of the most serious realities with which human beings have to do. I shall fail in my purpose, and you will fail in your opportunity, if I do not show you that marriage is inwoven with the weal or woe of humanity, as few dream when they bow to its overture of love and promise. We seem to be living in a time of unhappy and unholy marriages. How many ill-mated people there seem to be among us now! It would seem that this sad fact would be sufficient to make mothers wise and daughters cautious; but with all the glare of this beacon-light, with all the misery that thrills in the cry of the unfortunate, with all the dripping woe which girds the vision which many a once happy one sets over against the domestic bliss of those who were more deliberate, there is still a degree of blind fickleness on this subject among the young that is startling. If there ever is a time when a young

woman needs to be in possession of a calm and an unbiased judgment, a time when her highest faculties should be regnant, it is when she contemplates giving her hand, herself, to another. It is then she needs to consider the whole case; let her admire the sun-beam that lights up her vision, the dreams of love are often beautiful, but let her look well to the clouds that may lie with sullen frown on the horizon.

The sacred hour of a woman's life, the hour that is most crowded with joy or misery, is that hour which makes her the happy wife, or the miserable victim of the man to whom she has pledged her love and life. She may build her nest under the flushed eaves of heaven where the angels of God bower, or she may set it hard by the gates of woe to be swept by their wings of flame. These words are strong, but they are not without an unanswerable warrant. I heartily consent to this equally strong and most truthful utterance of Mrs. Dr. Studley: "There cannot by any possibility of accumulation of misery, come into your life so terrible a woe as that which results from a hasty, precipitate and rash marriage. The most forlorn 'old maid' that lives now, or ever has lived, or ever will live, is supremely happy in comparison with her who, like the beetles in summer-time, has rushed headlong into the matrimonial flame and been singed for life." Of course what is true on one side is equally true on the other. Such a marriage is just as perilous to a young man as to a young woman, and the calamity of a hasty and ill-advised union not unfrequently makes

the husband rather than the wife the victim. To him who has found a shrew in her whom he expected to find a wife, the sunshine of life has gone out, the birds have ceased to sing.

“ Better through life bare-footed press,
Than in a pinching shoe ;
Better no house or home possess,
Than have a bad wife, too.”

But I have set out to counsel young women, for after all they are the most imperiled in this matter, and as a rule are the greatest sufferers where the marriage has proven a blunder.

We shall do well to look a moment at this relationship into which it is appointed we shall enter for life. Very few, I fear, stop to consider marriage as an ordination of God, with which He has been pleased to identify His infinite purpose, and the present and future happiness of the race. It is not an invention of men, nor an occasion of indulgence; not a convenience, nor a response to evil purpose, though often so regarded, but an institution having for its commendation both the sanction and blessing of God. However men and women have perverted and debased marriage, in the mind of God its appointment is a response to the noblest functions and holiest faculties of our nature. A careful examination of the subject in the light of God's word will set forth two facts with significant emphasis.

One is, that marriage is a union of two lives, not any more beautiful in its intimacy than it is sacred in its

origin and design. It is made the fitting illustration of that most blessed fellowship between Christ and His church. The Holy Ghost lifts it into such exalted company, and so links it with the great purposes of God, that it is enough to make one shudder to think how it is profaned and reproached in these times of ours. When two persons approach the marriage altar, and there under the sanction and ministry of the Christian religion seal their solemn vows, without serious thought, and reckless of the sanctities of the obligation and holy purposes of their union, it is a mockery that blushes to the heavens.

The second thought plainly set forth in the Scriptures is, that marriage is that relationship in our human life, which contains vast possibilities of happiness and advantage for those who enter it. It is the proper and normal condition of human beings. It is not good for man to be alone ; it is not best for woman. We were made with a view to companionship, and the best progress and purest happiness of the race demand it. That some choose to go alone, and fare better than some others who do not, is no argument to the contrary. So sublime and holy a thing is marriage that life has endless charms, and heaven is made richer and brighter, for its creation and development of what is sacred and beautiful. As Luther has it, "God has set the type of marriage before us throughout all creation. Each creature seeks its perfection through being blent with another. The very heavens and earth picture it to us, for does not the sky embrace the green earth as

its bride? Precious, excellent, glorious is that word of the Holy Ghost: 'The heart of the husband doth safely trust in her.'"

Jeremy Taylor says: "Marriage is the nursery of heaven; the virgin sends prayers to God, but she carries but one soul to Him; but the state of marriage fills up the numbers of the elect, and hath in it the labor of love, and the delicacies of friendship, the blessing of society, and the union of hands and hearts; it hath in it less of beauty, but more of safety, than single life; it hath more care, but less danger; it is more merry and more sad; it is fuller of sorrows and fuller of joys; it lies under more burdens, but it is supported by all the strength of love and charity, and those burdens are delightful."

While the Scriptures make it unquestionably clear that marriage is the best state of those of proper age, the relationship of largest and noblest possibilities, it is not taught that it is essentially the condition of true character; indeed, as the testimony of celibacy has often been damaging to purity, so there is painful and ample evidence to show that marriage as a reformatory agency has often failed. Neither is it enjoined upon all to marry. There are undoubtedly some of such peculiar temperament that, on the ground of inability to find a corresponding mate, or one whose faculty of endurance is equal to the burden, had better go alone, while there are others whose circumstances and sense of obligation forbid their marriage.

Mr. Ruskin says: "No girl should receive her per-

mission to marry before her seventeenth birthday, nor any youth before his twenty-first; and it should be a point of somewhat distinguished honor with both sexes to gain their permission of marriage in the eighteenth and twenty-second year, and a recognized disgrace not to have gained it at least before the close of their twenty-first and twenty-fourth."

With all this, we are not to scorn the man or woman who is fated or has chosen to abide in single life. Among these are some of the best people and some of the kindest hearts in this world. You will find nowhere a devotion more beautiful, nor a self-denial more noble, nor a ministry of good more commendable, than has been manifest in many a woman who, from a sense of obligation to an aged mother, to helpless brothers and sisters, or to motherless children, has quenched the love that kindled at another's bidding, and chose rather to spend it alone on those who belonged to her by the ties of blood. Besides these there are others not less noble, whose fond hopes have been blighted by cruel disappointment, and still others whom death has robbed; and to the world they remain single, though they feel that the departed is still theirs, and no other one ever has, or ever will, substitute that first love still burning on the shaded altar, and still keeping its vestal vigil sleeplessly over the grave where its hopes went out. There is many such an one, who, with no home of her own, makes other homes brighter and better by her ministry of kindness and love.

It is not a sin to remain unmarried, nor is it always

a virtue. Marriage is not God's curse to the race, but His benediction. It is decidedly best for most men and women to marry, but it is not the duty of all. Among the most noble and useful of women of whom I have any knowledge, were the Cary sisters ; they are both gone, but they have left to us a beautiful picture of womanhood and the sweet memory of the just. They both remained unmarried, though not without frequent and worthy opportunity. Phoebe says, "I prefer my own life to that of the mass of married people that I see; it is a dreary, material life that they seem to me to live—no inspiration of the deepest love in it. And yet I believe that true marriage holds the highest and purest possibilities of human happiness." Decide the question as you may, never fail to regard it as worthy of your most serious and prayerful consideration, and in no event be guilty of undue haste. A most becoming example does Miss Cary furnish for your imitation in her reply, when, upon the proposal of an army officer, she asked a short time to consider the matter. The man of war peremptorily answered: "No, now or never." "Never!" was the prompt and proper reply of Miss Cary.

It will be also for you to keep in mind that there is a purpose of usefulness, rather than an opportunity for the indulgence of luxury and ease, in true marriage. It will do to have a canary caged and full of song hung in the chamber, but a sensible young man wants no such plumed songster for the wife who is to help him in the toil and battle of life. The honey-moon is

temporary; keep its light and joy, but let its ease and luxury vanish into a useful ministry not less blessed but more helpful. I do not mean that matrimony should ever make a drudge or a slave of any woman, but I do mean that in a useless wife, it should never put an intolerable yoke about any man's neck.

A young woman who grows faint at the sight of such sublunary things as challenge the interest and care of good house and home-makers, is ashamed of her first responsibility as a wife, and should blush for her incompetency. And if I am not mistaken in my observation, there is no little of this in our time.

Young misses just from boarding-school, with great stores of knowledge and accomplishments not a few, would fain marry if they can thereby be set up in state, and exhibited to the advantage of their beauty and culture; but as for any real service to the worthy and perhaps struggling young husband, they are shocked and offended at the thought.

Now, my dear friends, remember that whether such an alliance brings you fortune or not, you are not above the rest of mankind, and that there is no condition that relieves a wife of the holy obligation to live a really useful life. You may sing to your husband, and to him no voice will be as sweet as your own; you may supply in yourself his lack of personal grace and beauty; but it will require more than these to help him over the rough places in life, and to cheer his heart and nerve his arm when he must row against the stream.

You are to be a help meet, not a pet, not an idol of society, not an indolent votary of extravagance and pleasure, but a wife, industrious and frugal.

I congratulate the young wife who can grace the drawing-room and the parlor; but she who feels herself degraded by association with the details of domestic economy, may be all smiles, and wealthy in showy accomplishments, but she lacks one of the vital qualifications of a good wife and a happy home. I believe many a husband has been driven to madness and to crime in his desperate effort to maintain the royal state of the useless spendthrift who claimed to be his wife. Ruskin, in counseling a young lady, says: "Do you not feel that marriage—when it is marriage at all—is only the seal which marks the vowed transition of temporary into untiring service, and of fitful into eternal love."

But it is not my purpose so much to speak of your qualifications as a wife, as to guard you against mistakes in view of marriage.

I warn you first against the snare of appearances and promises. The purpose of marriage, indeed its dignity and glory, is so to blend the faculties of our being and the aims of our life, as that those bound by its sacred bonds shall no longer be twain, but one. In all that is noble, beautiful and pure, the one is to have no advantage over the other. The very imperfections of each are to find remedy in the perfections of the one or the other. The very woes that darken upon and waste the one are to be the sorrows of the other; and

so with the successes and triumphs of life, there is to be mutual help and advantage. This is the golden bar God puts up against separation.

I may call this unity of spirit, of interest and aim, the very genius, the white coronal of marriage.

At once, you must see how impossible such a unity is where a young woman has taken the shadow for the substance, and finds, often when too late, that what she thought to be truth is only a lying sham. Many a foolish young girl has been blinded, deceived and made miserable for life, by too ready a disposition to be caught up with the superficial pretensions of young men of society. There is a tendency in your nature to yield to the fanciful, and to trust fiction rather than fact. There is no event in your life in the consummation of which it is so solemnly necessary for you to remember that all is not gold that glitters, as in that step which carries you into the life-embrace of another. There are tricks in love as well as in trade, and one of them is making things seem to be what they are not. If a young man has gathered a brood of bad habits about him, or if he has developed qualities of mind and heart which only require familiarity to disclose them, and which can only prove the grief of a nobler character, rest assured he will not unchain the tiger in the presence of her upon whom he has set his heart. And yet, withal, how often in this serious matter of love and mate-making, industry, integrity, virtue and religion, are all set back to give place to snobbery, display and fashion. Many a young girl, taken with the

glare and tinsel and promise of the latter, has chosen to drop her laurels at the feet of the deceiver, only to see herself made a victim of a man's perfidy and her own folly. Ah, it takes more to make a man, infinitely more to make a husband, than buttons and jewels, and raiment that fits with elegance, and is redolent with the balm of a thousand flowers.

Remember, that appearances are often the mask of mockery, the gilding corruption puts on to hide its loathsomeness; and that promises are so cheap that a beggar or a knave can make them as well as a king or a saint. It is not so much what the young man appears to be in your presence, as what he actually is elsewhere, you want to know. Remember, it is the faculties and habits that have the mastery that are to have sway when an untrue purpose has won, and not those set forward for a time when the suit is pending. Love is beautiful, but if you allow it to blind you to the reality of things, it will forge the chain with which the tyrant binds his slave.

O, my young friends, it is not the one who promises well, not the one who proposes to build himself up into a worthy manhood out of your love and sympathy, you want for a husband. It is a noble thing, when possible, to gather up the fragments and rebuild the wreck of a man; but it is an awful venture to attempt it under the promise of that fitful love which sometimes has more of passion than of virtue in it.

Character is seldom reformed by marriage. There is often a temporary restraint; but it proves in most

cases to be the impulse of deception, and not an honest yearning for manhood. The young man who has integrity, industry, or all in one, the young man who has character, does not need superficial display, or material promise; his manhood is his challenge. This is a day of appeal to the eye, to self-indulgence and ease. Society never was so much of a "vanity fair." Wardrobes, turnouts and social pomp never had such dominion.

Hundreds in the decision of the most sacred question of marriage are influenced by appearances. The maintaining of appearances is a characteristic snare and evil of the times, both in and out of married life. The young man who is wanting in the elements of a noble manhood will keep his gay banner flying at every venture, and often the gaudy trap finds its victim in the person of a lovely girl; and before she has gotten well on in the voyage that promised so fair, her painted bark proves to be paper, and the fond hopes of a life worthy a better fate go to the bottom. Her mistake was, that she trusted to appearances. When you go to purchase a good dress, how careful you are. How you test the strength of the fabric—hold it up to the light that you may see every shade, and detect any defect that may lurk in its woof; ask questions about it, and submit it to the scrutiny of the more competent. In purchasing your *trousseau* you are not quite willing to trust to appearances. I beg you, be not less considerate in that important event which is to link your life and destiny with an-

other. Be on the alert for the mere appearance of things, when the pulses of love kindle the fires of fancy and of hope in the soul, and as you value your life and happiness, be satisfied with nothing but solid, sober reality.

Akin to this is the disposition in many to-day to marry for gold. It is a most delusive and ruinous snare. The evil is peculiar to our time. The gold fever is epidemic, and the death rate is appalling. Society to-day pays homage to the golden calf, and frets with the lust of money. When fathers and mothers are so taken in the toils of this monster, it is not strange that their inexperienced daughters should yield to the tempter. I need not say, that if fortune comes along with worth and sincere affection, you are not to despise the gift; but you are not to go hunting for it, nor to make it the delusive condition of a wedded life, as many do. You are not to marry a man because he is poor, still more should you blush to marry one because he is rich. Women, as well as men, are often quite willing to sacrifice the higher faculties, if thereby they can gain the state and ease they suppose to be enshrined in wealth. But such a course is degrading to every element of a worthy character.

Whenever a woman, in assuming the obligations of marriage, consents to the price offered for her, she is a bought victim, and not a true wife won by those excellences of manhood which alone can enshrine her in the heart of a worthy husband. There are few things which degrade marriage so much as woman's response

to gold. In not a few cases it has so perverted its lofty conditions, so sullied and demeaned its holy purpose, as to make it a crime. Marriage a crime! Yes, she who marries for gold has profaned every sanctity of marriage, made the union a mercenary contract—a humiliating stoop to the dust.

A writer in the *Independent* some time ago, spoke with pertinence and force when he said: "Whosoever gives the person, through the solemn rite of matrimony, without the heart; whosoever, for the sake of houses, and lands, and equipage, and position, and not for love—and love only—puts her hand into the hand of a man, is thenceforward no wife, but something far other. That certain legal forms are complied with may seal the lips of open criticism; but facts are facts in spite of it all."

We despise the man who takes a bribe; we put the mark of Cain upon him, and do not allow the grave to erase the foul blot from his memory. What shall we say of the mother who, in ways not less real nor base because they have the show of social respectability, offers her daughter to the highest bidder? What shall we say of the young woman who has her price, and often turning what is noble and pure away, waits for the man who is willing to pay for his victim? True, there are many noble exceptions, royal souls, who would scorn such an offer, and can only make response of love to such elements of character as they are competent to match, and blended in one, will be sure to invite the angels to their nuptials.

But the jingle of coin is the snare of society to-day, hundreds are disturbed in the true poise of womanhood by it, and they sell themselves to such as can maintain their state and indulgence. There never was a time when these lines of Byron were so painfully illustrated as in this day of ours:

“ Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And mammon wins his way where seraphs might despair.”

Promising as the prize may seem, it is rare that she who marries for money ever fares well. For such, as well as for that one who marries a victim of evil habit under promise of reform, a serpent often lies coiled among the orange blossoms.

When the ill-fated steamer, “Central America,” was found to be on fire, many of the passengers, returning from California with the treasure of the mines, abandoned their gold that they might not be hindered in the struggle for life. The stewardess finding it out, rushed into the state-rooms, and gathering together what she could find, girded her person with it, and reached the deck barely in time to make the last boat. More elated over her prize than she was conscious of danger, she sprang overboard, missed the boat, and shot into the sea, and sank like a stone out of sight forever. The gold that others, wiser than she, had abandoned, cost her her life. Ah! how many a noble girl, encouraged perhaps by a mother whose folly was wickedness, has set her heart on gold rather than on manhood, and in the glittering prize found only a sea of sorrow.

The love that adores money is lust, and whether in man or woman cannot make life noble and happy. And yet, I think it is seldom that a man of wealth fails in his suit for a woman's hand. There is such a bewitching, delusive charm in money, that women will often feign to love a man, who otherwise would be positively repulsive. But how hard—is it not the bitter experience of many—to love what is not there! Such a marriage, my young friend, is far from respectable. The pomp and outlay with which it may be celebrated only furnish the mask that covers the mockery, and often in the end the mockery taunts the misery.

Two suitors applied for the hand of the daughter of Themistocles. The one was rich and a fool, the other was wise but not rich. When the father was asked which of the two he preferred for his daughter, he answered: "I had rather she would marry a man without money, than money without a man. The best of marriages is in the man or the woman, not in the means or the money."

"Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Better the humblest cottage with love to fill it with light and beauty, than the most splendid mansion with indifference and neglect. I know these utterances will seem tame to those who love the showy and the sensual, but the darkened hopes and weary life of many a woman who was caught in the fickle glare of gold will testify to their truth. I

do not say that every man who has fortune, and offers you his hand, is unworthy of you. What I say is, that you are to be concerned about the man, and not about his money. It is the *man* whose worth you are to measure, the *man* you are to love, the *man* to whom you are to be joined, not his perishable treasure.

If you take him for other than he is himself, not because he furnishes in his character a hearty response to the noblest faculties of your being, but because he lays material treasure at your feet, your union with him is a wicked sham, and not righteous marriage.

A woman of the world may count it a silly thing to marry for love; but she who for the want of it reduces marriage to a mercenary contract, "degrades the institution, degrades herself, and inflicts what may be an irreparable wrong on the man she marries." Love is not all; it is possible to love one wholly unworthy of you; but it is so much that in mating for life, it must have large sway. If you leave pure and wisely-directed love out in your consent to marry, you will do violence to nature, violence to the law of God, and invite the whirlwind.

Once more. In a matter involving such solemn life-issues as marriage, every young woman should be considerate of those sacred convictions which have come to be part of her better self.

The mere ceremony of marriage does not necessarily imply, nor does it insure, the real unity which this institution contemplates.

If two persons are to be one in a sense so real and

sacred, it is very clear that they should not be at wide variance in those deepest convictions of the soul which so largely involve the success and happiness of human beings. The great misfortune of many who marry is the disparity between them in the strongest tendencies of their nature, and the most pronounced purpose of their lives: While love is making its overtures, these beating pulses are often forgotten, or else for some lower consideration they are modified or restrained in one or the other; but afterwards they are quite certain to assert themselves, and more than once their maintenance has been at painful cost. I do not mean that you are to look for perfection—you cannot furnish such a prize in yourself; nor do I mean that it is possible or even best, that those who wed should be alike in every particular. It is not unity without difference, but unity with it, that is desired. In many respects there may be disparity, and so the one may prove a wholesome complement to the other; but in the dominant feelings and purposes of the soul there should be harmony, and there must be, if the peace of heart and home is to be undisturbed.

This thought is not without importance, with respect to the mind. If one or the other excels in intellect, there should at least be in the one of lesser attainments a corresponding taste which would insure a responsive sympathy.

I fail to see how husband and wife can be happy as they may be, where there is a wide breach, instead of a common bond, between their intellectual interests

and the moral sympathies. These may flow in different channels, and with varied volume, but with a common end; they should reflect happily and usefully upon each other, and then the difference will be as the different parts in a beautiful choral, making the harmony the more complete. The differences between two who join to make the race of life together should be such as would command the esteem, and serve as a wholesome impulse to one or the other, and not, as is sometimes unhappily the case, such as to arouse the dislike and resentment which, to bonds so delicate and sacred, are as the lightning to the tree it shatters.

But this thought has a still more vital bearing upon the moral and religious convictions. Where these are true and in healthy growth, they are the strongest that dominate in the soul. It is true there are many excellent husbands who do not profess the faith of their wives; they respect the religion of the wife so far as to maintain peace; but this is far from true of all, and it is just as true that the happiness now maintained is not without alloy, and that it would be greatly magnified if husband and wife were of one mind in a matter so necessary, good and beautiful. It may be I am now speaking to the young woman whose hand is sought by one who outwardly is tolerant, but inwardly hates her religion. It is quite enough to cause you to consider seriously the step you are about to take. How can two walk together except they be agreed? If the matter be made a test, there may be many promises of acceptance or of non-interference. The testimony of

thousands of homes does not encourage confidence in such promises. I am frank to own that a man may have many virtues, in many ways prove himself a kindly and worthy companion, without religion; but I am just as frank to say that there is a wide breach between a religious wife and an irreligious husband.

She is desirous to be faithful in her religious duties, but he has nothing in common with her here, and the result must be anxious and painful. She must go alone in that very thing in which above all she desires her husband to accompany her, and in which it is so eminently proper they should not be at variance. Where this difference exists, with what opposite experiences they must bow to the trials of life, and with what varied mutual sympathies look upon and share each other's infirmities; and how far apart must not their view be of life's noble aim. In all the most sacred hours of life they do not, cannot stand together, as should two souls blent in one by bonds death only is to break.

I know it is often said that the pious wife may be the means of the salvation of the irreligious husband. Such has, indeed, been the result in some instances: but is it not more frequently the case that the wife has failed to realize this fond hope, and very often, instead of winning the husband to Christ, he has won her to the world, and over the marriage altar she has made shipwreck of faith.

I must charge you, therefore, in the contemplation of so solemn and important a matter as marriage, to

consider seriously those religious principles and convictions and duties to which you are indebted more than to all else for the womanhood which has stirred the love and made you worthy of the hand of another ; and if these cannot be maintained, be true to yourself and true to your God, though it should deprive you of the life-companionship of one you have learned to love.

If there is one place in this world at which husband and wife should meet in the completest harmony, it is at the cross of Christ.

“ Together should their prayers ascend ;
Together should they humbly bend,
To praise the Almighty name.”

I go a step farther, and say that in marriage you should beware of the painful evils that have often resulted from the union of two persons who held directly opposite and irreconcilable religious beliefs. The happy and prosperous marriages between Roman Catholics and Protestants are the exceptions ; as a rule they are not happy, and in many cases they have proven not only disastrous to happiness, but to morals as well.

I may speak of this with freedom, not only because such alliances in our cities are frequent, but also because they are just as much opposed by Romish priests as by Protestant ministers. Cardinal Manning, in a recent sermon in Liverpool, entered a strong protest against the marriage of Catholics with Protestants. He declared that mixed marriages, as he knew by

long experience of his own flock, brought lukewarmness, negligence, non-fulfillment of duty, and the sending of children to schools that were not Catholic, where they could never learn their religion, and where they acquired habits which ended at last in entire loss of faith. Cardinal McCloskey, in a recent pastoral letter, says: "As marriage is a most intimate union of husband and wife, the heart of both should beat in thorough sympathy; consequently the religious conviction of both ought to be in perfect harmony. The Catholic Church, therefore, ever solicitous for the happiness of her children, and with the wisdom given to her from above, has always detested and forbidden mixed marriages. There can be no perfect harmony in the family circle, no thorough coöperation in the training of children, no instilling of deep religious truths in their minds, where there is no common faith, nor mutually respected and practiced forms of divine worship."

For similar reasons, but from a very different standpoint, such marriages are and should be discountenanced by both Protestant ministers and parents. As a rule, one of two things respecting religious faith is sure to follow such marriages. There will either be a surrender of the religious convictions of one or the other, which often means a surrender of man or womanhood as well, or an indifference to and a neglect of religious duty will follow, which is equivalent to surrender.

You all know that I am stating a fact which your

own observation will corroborate. When love is pressing its suit, there will be ample promise of no interference in matters of religion; but we all know how fickle such promises are, and how certain they are to be disregarded, especially in the case of those who have been taught that they are not the keepers of their own consciences.

It may be that there will be no interference on the part of the husband or wife; but more than once the confessor of one or the other has interfered, and sometimes to the rending of ties which no man had any right to disturb. But suppose that two persons of such irreconcilable religious convictions succeed in living happily; the husband for peace sake submits to the rearing of his child in the opposite faith of his wife, and he gives his religious obligations to the winds, or fulfills them as best he can under the circumstances; he makes every effort to gratify his wife, and the wife does her best to please her husband. By a painful silence, and a very considerable amount of submission which is not intensely manly, they pass down through the varied experiences of life in the maintenance of a commendable love and sympathy for each other, until at last they have reached the close of their pilgrimage; and now at the grave, the last place for the triumph of prejudice and bigotry, they must part—the Protestant husband is not allowed to lie side by side with his Catholic wife. They could live together in love, and each serve God according to their own consciences; the Protestant may have been a devoted follower of

Christ; but the contaminating dust of the one must not mingle with the consecrated ashes of the other. You may say that is a miserable tyranny, and a poor commendation of the religion that demands it, true; but if you do not wish the penalty, you need not accept the conditions. It is often quite impossible for parents always to control their children in such a matter; hence such counsel as this is very necessary, and should commend itself with all heartiness to any who are in danger of being taken in the toils of this snare. Here again, I may say with an unanswerable emphasis, how can two walk together except they be agreed?

I have spoken with distinctness, not with hostile feelings toward those whose religious views are far other than mine, but with a sincere desire to serve those to whom I especially come, in a matter of momentous importance. I have only aimed to guard your most sacred interests, and, if possible, to secure to you that happiness without which life can have no charm, and home no song.

It is in the beginning all these evils which continually menace the marriage altar must be avoided, if ever.

When once the union is consummated, it is too late. "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." I shall not have failed in my purpose, if in any good part I have been successful in setting your prayerful vigilance against those evils, which for some have violently torn these bonds asunder, and for others, have turned them into the fetters of a slave.

Finally, I shall indulge the hope that you have

easily observed that the trend of my counsel has been to exalt character above everything else. Without character, strong and beautiful, your marriage may be the most fearful venture. It is manhood, well rooted in truth and righteousness, not the mocking pretense of it, you want.

The orange blossoms may be wanting, and it will matter but little; but the fragrance of a good name, the understanding whose price is above rubies, these are indispensable.

Remember that no man stands in the most noble and kingly manhood who has no reverence for God, and who counts the doctrines and graces of the Christian religion quite beneath his respect and devotion. Such a character bears no testimony to the faithfulness a wife has a right to expect, and is essential to the purest happiness. You should fear to marry any man who is at war with Jehovah, and you should count it the grandest of all testimonies to your worth, if an impulse stirs within you to "*marry only in the Lord.*"

When that bridal day dawns upon you, which should be holy and joyous next to the day that welcomes your soul to heaven, I trust you may have considered your steps to the marriage altar so well, that the white-winged angels will come as welcome guests to your nuptials, and departing leave the light of their train on your pathway; and that as the years come and go, your mutual love may never chill, but grow and keep on growing, until death only shall quench its flame, and you are caught up to share the unending fellowship of the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven.

CHAPTER XII.

PIETY.

"The cross, if rightly borne, shall be
No burden, but support to thee."—*Whittier.*

"There are briers besetting every path,
That call for patient care,
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer ;
But the lowly heart that trusts in God
Is happy everywhere."

In bringing these lectures to a close, it is not only fitting but essential to their completeness, that I direct your attention, with the emphasis of specific address, to God's claims upon you, and to the ample and gracious provision He has made for your higher or spiritual nature. In such an announcement I am confident I will not awaken your surprise, for from the beginning you cannot but have observed that my purpose to establish you on a permanent Christian basis has not been concealed. May I not indulge the hope that what you have read in the foregoing pages will have so elevated your thought respecting woman and her work as to make the present theme an agreeable one? To hesitate or turn aside at this point will prove the forfeiture of all that has gone before, and the abandonment of that splendid womanhood to which you

have been appointed, and which we have attempted to describe. A refusal to read on, and to profit by what remains, because of any distaste you may entertain for the subject, would be such an interpretation of yourself as to put a sorry blight upon your character, and discover your life to others, if not to yourself, as a waste or an indulgence wholly unworthy of you.

Not so much for any pleasure of mine as for your own greatest profit and happiness, may I entreat you, hear me to the close; and if not already done, I pray that, before we part, you may be constrained to look penitently and lovingly into the face of Christ. He waits your consecration, that He may crown you. Let it be no empty form, no half-hearted overture, but full and complete as that so beautifully illustrated in the life, and so well spoken in these words of the sainted Miss Havergal:

“Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee!
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee!
Take my voice, and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages for Thee.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, *all* for Thee.”

As best I could in the limitation put upon me, I have sought to show you your indebtedness to Chris-

tianity, and how it waits your ministry ; and now, if I shall refer to these facts again, the repetition will not be an inadvertence, but an additional testimony to the most important condition of true womanhood, and an appeal to urge upon you a personal acceptance of the Gospel.

Certainly it must be easily apparent, that the standard lifted to your gaze on these pages will require far more, of those who would attain to its excellence, than any external accomplishments or advantages may furnish. Gifts are not to be despised, neither is a faint, flickering lamp in the dark ; but the first can no more provide a substitute for the grace of Christ, than the second can take the place of the sun.

It might well be sufficient to make plain your duty and advantage in this matter, by the one single fact that He who set your pulses going, and is as infinite in His wisdom as He is in His love, has bidden you en-throne Him in your heart and life.

Certainly it is something that God speaks to you so directly and so distinctly on a question that involves more than all. If you close your ears and heart to that voice, it will avail nothing that any other voice call to you, though it be with the charm of tenderness and the melody of music. But God's voice sounds elsewhere than from the parted heavens and the written word, and we shall strive to establish His claim upon you, both from the human and the divine side.

In so doing, I am happy to say that there is a beautiful harmony between the claims of God upon you

and those joyous impulses of your nature, and those innocent worldly delights which put light into your vision, and music into your soul. When I insist that God's claim is first, and that Christian life is above all and best, I do not mean that all of human life is vanity, or that all that may delight you in it, is sinful. As little as another who expresses it so well, do I believe "that you are only to be saved by learning to despise things which you love, and to love things which you despise." What is wasteful and sinful must be cut off, and what has been misdirected must be sanctified. The religion of Christ tolerates no sinful excesses, and as little does it impose any irrational conditions. It is a great perversion when piety is presented to the young as a dismal shadow that is fatal to the joyous fervor of youth. Piety, my young friends, is rather an emerald bow, radiant with a light and beauty that falling on much about you that you love, transfigures it into glory. I would have you hate cant, and as much that grim religion that is but the caricature of the true, and as forbidding as it is reproachful to an enlightened soul. You are to bring your loving heart, and the noble faculties and opportunities of your life, to the altar of God, not that you may be more hampered, but less; not that you may be less able to achieve in the good and true, but more; not that your happiness, may be diminished, but magnified and glorified. A woman has not found an indifferent value, nor an expensive luxury, but an inestimable gem, when she has given all for the Pearl of great price.

No cost is loss that brings such a return. Who owns this treasure possesses a joy, beholds a vision of beauty, and is going to a crown, whose price is above rubies.

Piety is not in any way a monopoly, it is not for a select few; still, I can think of nothing so entirely becoming a woman.

There is a feeling of dependence native to a woman's heart which seems to say: "I need, I must have Jesus Christ." To me she seems to be in possession of some high faculty which disposes her to look lovingly into His face, who for her sake once reposed dependent upon a mother's bosom. Indeed, I think it is easily noticeable, that the moment a woman, by the waste of indulgence, or by the perversion of her mission, assumes an independence that is unwomanly and unnecessary, that moment she abandons that disposition to lean on Christ, which the noblest of her sex have often beautifully illustrated. She can take care of herself when she scorns the dependence which God means shall be an excellence and not a humiliating limitation of her nature, and not unfrequently she braves the venture for eternity as well as for time. It is not only more common, but really less difficult, for women to become and live piously, than it is for men. God's grace is equally adequate in either case, but I am speaking now of a fact abundantly certified in human life. God's appeal comes to you not with greater authority, nor with greater force of necessity, than it comes to men, but I am confident with far less disad-

vantage. It was not without reason that Augustine referred to woman as the "devout sex." Woman possesses a deeper reverence, and a warmer affection than men; besides, her position in life is less exposed to temptation, and renders her more susceptible to gracious influences.

Really, I think, there is very much in your favor in this matter, not because you are weaker, but stronger in the higher faculties than men.

"It is not by chance," says Heber Newton, "that women gravitate toward our churches. Woman's deepest need is met in the revelation of One who incarnates her ideals, voices the inner whispers of her spirit, bodies before her the law of God, becomes her conscience, lays on her the mastery which is freedom, the yoke in which she finds rest to her soul, inspires a holy love which thrones in her heart a King." Beyond all controversy, the secret want, the perfection and glory of true womanhood is—Christ.

When I come, then, to bid you respond to the invitation of Christ, by putting yourself and your life under His dominion, I am not asking you to accept an overture which will do violence to the noblest elements of your nature, or frustrate your best hopes, but one that will transform your holiest ideal into a conscious fact. She is strongest and best who best knows herself, and by the dominance of her better nature, can apprehend and appreciate a vision of Him who is the perfection of every excellence.

Dannecker, the German sculptor, spent eight years

on a marble statue of Christ. He ranked with Angelo and Canova. After two years of diligent toil, the work seemed finished. He called into his studio a young girl, and, directing her attention to the statue, asked her, "Who is that?" She replied, "A great man." The artist turned away disheartened. His artistic eye had been deceived. He had failed, and his two years of hard work were lost. He began anew, and after two more years of patient labor, he called the young girl again into his studio, and repeated the inquiry, "Who is that?" She gazed silently upon the beautiful features for awhile, and then her curiosity deepened into a feeling of awe and gratitude, and bursting into tears she said, in low and gentle tones, "Suffer little children to come unto me." It was enough. The sweet faith and love of the child had divined his meaning, and he knew that his work was a success. He believed then, and ever afterward, that he had been inspired of God to do that thing. He thought he had seen a vision of Christ in his solitary vigils. It is such a vision you want; and if you would ever behold it, it will not be by any skill of artistic genius, nor in any stony image cut by the hand of man, but in Him who incarnated God, and by those high faculties of spiritual faith, and love, and self-denial, and holiness, which are as becoming to a woman as purity is to an angel.

Gazing upon Jesus, upon what He is, upon what He did for you, and as well upon what you should be glad to do for Him, you cannot fail to be transformed

into the same image, which is womanhood transfigured with the radiance of the divine glory.

I have already spoken with consideration of your womanly endowment, and of the possibilities of good or evil of which you are capable. It may well be a serious question with you to determine what you shall do to develop and to give such direction to these forces as will help you to achieve the best results. She to whom such a thought does not come with great majesty of appeal, is as dull to the best impulses of her own soul, as she is to the voice of God. If a parent discovers rare gifts in a child, common prudence suggests that no available means be spared to fit that child for the fortune and fame that lie concealed in its endowment. God sees very much in every one of you; the humblest and poorest among you possess elements that would not demean an angel; and He has spared no cost to have you see what He sees, and to induce you to accept that rescue of His love and grace which will magnify your faculties by so much as the new creature in Christ is superior to the old nature in sin. The lines of God's image are cut very deeply in your souls; and what with love, and patience, and sympathy, and trust, and kindly devotion, He beholds the germ of such virtues in you as distinguished the angels, and with the consecration He appoints, would make you like them. The diamond has value when it lies buried in the debris or under the ground; but it has more, even beauty, and a mission worthy of it, when it is ground and flashes in the crown of a queen

So the great forces of your better nature are not without worth in their perversion; but, when by God's touch they are cleansed of evil, and lifted up to an aim worthy of them, then have they a value that is priceless, and a force that is masterly.

Need I ask you what should be the dominant inspiration and purpose of a being, girded in her nature as God has girded you? Is it seemly that a woman should be devoted to the world to the degree of degrading bondage, and decidedly hostile to Jesus Christ and that life of which He is at once the source and inspiration?

A jewel in a swine's snout is not more out of place, than such a perversion.

Just because you are what you are; just because, as a rule, you have advantage of disposition and function, the poles of good and evil centre in you. You have often heard that a godless woman is the worst of beings.

There is an awful significance in this fact. Wherefore? Simply because when great gifts are prostituted, they appear more dreadful, and are capable of greater harm, than the debasement lesser gifts can occasion. When the angels fell, it was heaven that felt the throes of rebellion; when man sinned, the earth reeled with the shock: the first fell from such a height, as to plunge to the abysmal depths of a starless night; and so when a woman goes down, the very blackness of darkness settles about her, so lofty is the height from which she falls.

I do not believe it is possible to put into language an exaggerated description of a thoroughly bad woman. An irreligious man, unless he be thoroughly animal, looks upon such a woman as a monster, and turns away from her with horror.

Between such a woman, and one who has put on Christ, and in all her masterly faculties and goodly ministry is showing to others the image of her Master, there is an infinite distance. There is no place on earth, not even among the degraded and lost, where such a woman has not dominion, and does not receive the respect her royal character challenges.

But you are not among the degraded and the out-cast; you have been reared in respectable—some of you doubtless in godly homes; but whilst above the openly wicked in your moral character, and far more worthy and favored in your social relations, it is possible that you may have no more to do with God and Christ than they have, and that in all spiritual worship and ministry and hope, you are just as far from Him who asks your loving obedience, and who is most of all entitled to it. Your great faculties are far from a consecration worthy of them, when clad in respectability, and employed only for the service of self. In the time to come, when every work shall be tried as by fire, it will matter little whether your life and the noble forces of your being have been wasted in the self-indulgence of low debauchery, or the dissipation and follies of social toleration. So long as your life, your character, the controlling purposes of your soul,

are at variance with God's mind, you are not considerate of your best being; you are not achieving anything like the mission of which you are capable and to which you are appointed; and, so continuing, on the day of destiny your respectable position in society will give you no advantage over the poor outcast from whom you now turn with more of indignation than of pity.

Indeed it may seem in His pure eyes, who knows all and can make no mistake, that you are the guiltier of the two, on the just ground that to whom much is given, of her will much be required. It must be, that with your numerous advantages, luminous moments must now and again come to you; moments, when the better angels of your nature struggle to promote you to a higher life than you are living. As you look betimes toward the distant horizon, as solemn thoughts steal on you in your better moments, as the light now and again seems to fade out of the sky, and your young life grows pensive and sad, is there any loving faith in you, readily catching the light of hope shimmering on the cloud? any interpreting power of love quick to apprehend God's sweet bow of promise bent on its gloomy bosom?

If not, how weak as the worst, how comfortless as the lowest you are, when you need to assert the great faculties of your soul the most. In such a case, how vastly less free, less noble, less womanly, and less masterly in all that is good you must be, than those who have taken sanctuary in Jesus, and who, though

they may have little sway in society, even now belong to the family whose names are written in heaven.

You may be cultured, have attained to skill in the mental acquirements and accomplishments of life, occupy a first place in the social kingdom; but if the great forces of your soul have never been quickened and renewed by the Spirit of God; if the dominant impulses and purposes of your life do not go to brighten the coronal of the Divine glory, you lack one thing, and that one thing is so much as to involve all. Christ as a personal Saviour, Christ as an inspiration and life, Christ as a dominant purpose and final destiny, is the true dignity and crown of woman.

Religion alone can bind you to the Infinite; religion alone is adequate to the regeneration and worthy challenge of all your powers; it can exalt your very weaknesses to might and courage, and as it has with many before you, it will invest you with a majesty and power that will make you the most efficient of all the material agencies in the universe, to bless the world with the highest moral excellence, and with the most refined and exalted social distinction and happiness. There is no throne on earth equal in excellence and power to that occupied by a truly godly woman.

How can she be else than a sad derangement, an unseemly force of evil, never attaining to greatness or goodness, who is irreligious, and in heart and life is set against Him who alone embodies her noblest ideal?

To such a consecration of yourselves, my young friends, as your Lord asks of you, you should count

any needed sacrifice a luxury, heartily saying, as you turn your face and open your heart to Jesus :

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small ;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands *my soul, my life, my all.*”

But not only for the best development of your faculties, but also for the right use of them, must I commend piety to your earnest attention. Religion is a life ; not a dead force, nor an empty form, but a reality manifest in daily duty.

Whether you apprehend and will fulfill it or not, a noble mission has been assigned to you in this life. As certainly as you need Christ for the recovery and inspiration of the higher forces of your soul, so surely do you need Him for the wise and effectual performance of your life-work. No matter what your mission may be, or what particular place it may assign you—in the home, in the Church, in society, or in the world—you have learned before this that such vital issues are involved in it, as to give to it a sanctity, which makes recklessness or indifference in the performance of it a terrible crime. It may be that you have been taken in that snare so common to the time ; I mean a disposition to divorce the daily duty, or calling of life, from everything like religion. There is a personal independence to-day respecting the relation of the creature to the Creator, which, whether always so meant or not, virtually says to Christ, and to religious obligation, “Keep your place, and avoid intrusion.” You have

seen the placard barring the way to factory, office, or private room, on which was printed, "No admittance." How startling when any man or woman looks toward Him to whom they owe all, and then points to a like message written over the gate-way of their life-work.

Identified with your toils, your experiences and purposes, what cares, what anxieties, what responsibilities, what trials are to come! I trust the inspiration of competency, the sweet joy of others' approval, and the largest success may stimulate you in every right endeavor; but these will be poor compensation for the comfort and presence of Christ in your life. No matter where duty may call you, or to what, Jesus Christ knows all its burden, and He alone can make you masterful in any good work you may undertake. I implore you, as you contemplate your mission in this world, do not, in the base folly of some, draw a great black line, between religion and your daily task. Of course no work to which religion is justly offensive, is worthy the time and strength of any respectable woman. Give Christ large room in the supreme purpose of your life, and your very defeats will possess more of benediction than the triumphs of those who reject Him.

Take any position which is liable to fall to woman's lot; that of teacher, of writer, of wife and mother, of minister of mercy to the poor and sick, of missionary to the heathen, or of prominence and usefulness in society; and no matter what superior natural gifts, or what acquired accomplishments she may possess, she

cannot fail to be immensely advantaged by that endowment of Christian grace, which gives adornment, strength and noblest distinction to all other qualifications.

To be true to our better selves, and true to God, we must aim to do more than simply perform the task that falls to us. She does her work best who does it from a conviction of right, and with a benevolent end in view.

There is a higher sense than a sense of duty. Every work worthy such a being as God has made you, should have a high moral end in view, so that if it tax and waste your physical and mental force, it will not fail to contribute to your moral strength, and the good of others. But without Christ in the heart, no such spirit ever beats with holy pulse in the mission of life. Duty is sacred, but when love to God and to mankind thrills in it, it is divine. The greatest gifts are never sacrificed, no matter what their worldly promise, when they are surrendered to a consecration at once so holy and so fruitful. Mrs. Emily C. Judson was one of the most gifted of women. She had attained to literary fame, and hundreds were pleased to lay the tribute of their praise at her feet. She resolved to enlarge and give a higher consecration to her mission, by becoming the wife of a foreign missionary, and devoting her splendid gifts to helping the heathen up to the light. Many of her cultured admirers were surprised that she should give up such gifts and such prospects to such an object; they marveled that she

should think it her duty to make such a sacrifice, and they ventured to remonstrate with her. The noble woman heard them, and then responded with the "indignant eloquence" of these lines :

"Stern duty? No! Love is my ready foot winging;
On duty's straight path, Love her roses is flinging;
In love to the Friend of my heart I am clinging;
My 'home' is His smile, my 'far-off' is His frown.

"He shaped the frail goblet which Death one day will shiver;
He casts every sun-ray on Life's gloomy river;
They're safest when guarded by Maker and Giver,
My laurels and *life* at His feet I lay down."

To all who are not content with the seen and temporal, but whose vision of holy faith penetrates the unseen and eternal, and whose Christ-ly love interprets to them the imperishable treasures that harbor in its bosom, it will be clear enough that she made no mistake; and now, while those who chided her for what seemed a foolish outlay are forgotten, her name shines in the galaxy of the good and great, and of the enthroned on high, as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever. Had she devoted her magnificent gifts to chasing the mirage of empty fame, they would have been prostituted, and the sublime mission of a noble life would have been forfeited. She laid all on God's altar, and in return, Christendom to-day has an inspiration out of which comes joy and benediction, while her name and memory still achieve with the power of an endless life.

To the choice of a proper mission, and to the illus-

tration of the Spirit of Christ in it, what a stimulus you have in the opportunity Christianity offers to you to-day. In its noblest and grandest triumphs it waits your coming and help. Always the best friend of woman, it comes to-day to throw the bright light of her highest coronation on her path. More than ever, the divine faculties of faith, and love, and self-denial, and holiness, are bound to win in this world; but she only knows these, she only can illustrate their blessed mastery, and may wear their laurels, who knows the Christ of God.

The courage to do and to suffer in His name, who "endured the cross, despising the shame," is to be prized more than ever above the courage to boast and contend. Who achieves by faith, who conquers by love, who ministers like the angels, shall overcome, attain to blessed immortality, and reign a priest and king unto God. I can easily tell you how you will fail if you live for self, gathering about you, in what way you choose, the soiled and perishable laurels of pride, indulgence and show; but if you go forth in the name of Christ, to magnify His grace in your spirit and work, your victory will have an infinite scope, and God's angels will help you sing it.

Piety, then, I must insist, is absolutely necessary, both to the proper development and the best appropriation of your gifts and opportunity. The life of godliness is the only way of permanent success. It is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

As one of the wisest of secular writers, speaking of woman's duties with an unanswerable emphasis, observes: "You can no more perform these offices to which you are called, properly and efficiently, without piety, than a bird can fly without wings. You would be trying to make bricks without straw. Think of a woman by the side of a dying sister, or a sick child, or a sorrowing friend, or a broken-hearted and broken-spirited man, without a word of heaven in her mouth—without so much as the ability to whisper, 'Our Father,' or even to point her finger hopefully towards the stars."

To-day God offers you, in Christ, not only pardon and peace, but the best endowment for all good ministry in this world. Will you accept? Heaven help you to cast all the weakness of self and all the vanity of the world behind you, saying, as every fetter falls from your enlightened soul: "*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*"

Finally, may I yet bring to your attention those issues of the future, so interwoven with the present, which involve the whole character of your destiny, and for which you are only wisely considerate, when you have made hearty response to God's claims upon you?

This will seem a questionable motive to some; but I think it all the more important because of a disposition to-day to ignore and scoff at all future conse-

quences of evil doing. "Fools make a mock at sin," and there are not a few in our time who live in the lowest elements of their nature, and who greet all appeal of the future with an indifference or a violence, which reveals their weakness, not their strength.

They vaunt their pride, and laugh at the thought of penalty in the world to come. It is nothing to them that the immortal soul is debased, in defiance of the mightiest forces of the universe to recover it to holiness and to God.

They propose to get what they can out of the present, and allow the future to take care of itself, ignorant that the spirit and purpose of the present constitute the character of the future.

This course they esteem as manly liberty and the wisdom of an unshackled mind, as set over against the merciful overture of infinite love, both in the interposition of Jesus Christ and His preached Gospel. Remember that it is easy for dullness, indulgence and swollen pride, to laugh over such a matter. Was it not a like folly that once wrung the tears from the Son of God? The basest profligate, whose touch you would count defilement, and whose company you would scorn, will join in such profane protest. But suppose the animal in human nature sometimes does so triumph as to lead a human being to snap his fingers at all an evangelical faith holds sacred respecting the future; suppose a human being can become so hard and coarse in all the best sensibilities of his nature as to laugh himself out of the world, and go as

thoughtlessly into the presence of a holy God, as a merry dancer might whirl out of a lamp-lit room—what has he gained? Can you afford to live under the horrid spell of such an intention? Is it rational, is it best, is it womanly to brave such a venture? As you interpret the heart and look at the brazen face of such frightful daring, do you not rather feel the chill of the shocking, than the helpful inspiration of the noble? I cannot think that you will be so utterly ignorant of life, so blind to ordinary affairs, so contemptuous of all that is noble in you, and of all that God has done for you, as to go toward your future in such a spirit of wicked madness.

Besides, there is really a great majesty about this appeal that must commend it. It is not low, slavish fear that I come to start in you, but a proper apprehension of that high faculty of personal accountability to God, which constitutes one of the sublimest excellences, as well as efficient forces, in a noble nature. There is no nobler, no freer, no stronger soul than that one who lives in the stirring conviction of this great truth. Without it proper character is not possible, and a happy successful life is never achieved. Webster was right, when being asked on one occasion, what was the greatest thought that ever engaged his mind? he answered promptly, "My personal accountability to God." Without hesitancy, and because I would be true to the best impulses of your nature, as well as to the well-attested truth of God, I come to assure you that you are accountable beings, that you must answer

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to God for your life, and that you cannot live as you please, and reap what you may elect in the future. In your life to-day you are making up the verdict of God and eternity. As we sow we must reap. If to the flesh, we shall have its pinching reward; if to the spirit we shall not lose its fadeless glory.

She does not get the most, but the least out of this life, who is indifferent to or sneers at that solemn curtain that trembles before her advancing step. If you have no time to make ready for the future, by living in view of its certain coming, there is a solemn significance in asking you—How are you spending your time? Is it going in vanity or pleasure, or in any unmentionable indulgence? How can these serve you in the beyond? Will the memory of such a life be fruitful of good to others? Or do you say, "Circumstances enforce such a life of care and toil upon me, that I have no strength left to give attention to the realities of a future world?" Ah, do you not know that correct spiritual relations, that companionship with God, is not only the true help in such burdens, but infinitely above them? The life is more than meat. When the house is caught up in the flames, it is not the implements of revelry, not the decorations, the luxuries, and the toys we strive to save—it is the child. As you look toward the future, as you set about to achieve your life mission, God asks you to regard the life first, to be just as reasonable and sensible in spiritual realities as you are in temporal things. In any event, believe what you may, do you as you like, you are on the way to

final and fixed destiny, and the solemn fact may confront you ere you are aware.

God, in a mercy that is wonderful, has endowed you with gifts, to which He has added the grace of His Son; and young though you may be, you are on your rapid way to account for your stewardship. To have all this without any future accountability to God, would be to lay an unnecessary munificence at your feet. Not to demand an account for the blessings you enjoy, for the manner in which you have fulfilled your mission, would, I hold, be a reproach upon your great nature, and bring you down from being near to the angels, to being near to the animal. Now, to leave such a vital truth out of the spirit and purpose of your life, is not only to make life's journey without any destination in view, but it is to rush rashly and unprepared upon a destiny which is most sure. These words acquire an impressive interest because I know that God is the Author of the truth they contain. He it is, who so distinctly announces that He will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or evil. I need I ask you which is the better impulse, which will likely make you most happy and useful?—to live without any regard to God's will and commandments, or to address yourself to life's mission in such manner as to challenge His blessing and maintain a conscience void of offence? Blessed only will you be, and ready only for the summons that will call you into the presence of your Judge, when your heart is comforted by, and your daily path radiates, the bright light of

that good hope of grace, which is God's great and loving response to simple faith in Jesus Christ.

And now I am done, and we who have gone so pleasantly together in this ministry must part, perhaps not to meet again until the heavens be no more. The thought gives additional and solemn emphasis to my words. We are traveling different paths in the achievement of our mission, but we are going to one common rendezvous. You who are walking through garden land, beautiful, and flowery, and fragrant, and we who walk in the snow, or wait in the valley, where the trees are dripping, and the road is steep—we shall all come face to face to one solemn rendezvous! Shall we meet that sure destiny in the sweet composure of those who have the calm of God upon them? We shall, if the great Christ is the rod and staff on which our hands rest. Is it strange, after such a service, that I should wonder how it will be when this very ministry I have rendered in your behalf shall come to the final test? Some day in that far-off beyond, in that sunny land, where the emerald bow springs its arch over the Throne, and where saints and angels gather to bear their testimony to redeeming love, there, "sitting or straying upon some heavenly hill, watching upon the far-stretching plains the tented hosts of God's redeemed, or marking the shadows of an angel's flight across the bright mirror of the river of life," we shall meet perchance, and this ministry sincerely and affectionately rendered in behalf of your souls will come to mind. I am certain I shall be glad

then, that I sought to enthrone Christ in it; and our joy will be mutual if His lustrous image in your own face, and the acclaim of His triumphs on your own lips, shall be the happy assurance that I have not spoken in vain. And so it shall be, if you will seek the charm of life and the crown of glory only by the prompt and hearty confession of your confidence in Jesus Christ.

“ Trust His saving love and power;
Trust Him every day and hour;
Trust Him as the only light
In the darkness of the night.
Trust in sickness, trust in health,
Trust in poverty and wealth;
Trust in joy, and trust in grief;
Trust His promise for relief.
Trust His blood to cleanse your soul;
Trust His grace to make you whole.
Trust Him living, dying too;
Trust Him all your journey through;
Trust Him till your feet shall be
Planted on the crystal sea.”



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